INDO-CEYLON RELATIONS

(1900 - 1947)

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Contents

(Continued)

Contents - Continued.

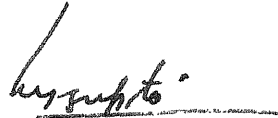
Page

Maps

Preface

This study of Indo-Ceylon relations relates to a period when neither country could be said to be the master of its own destiny. The British authority ruled both, and policies were determined largely in the interest of the British ruling classes. Social and Cultural relations between the two countries have always been intimate and these bonds survived the colonial interlude. The most outstanding issue between India and Ceylon during the period reviewed in this work concerned the discrimination against the people of Indian origin whose forefathers had been brought to the Island for work on tea and rubber plantations. Although this issue assumed alarming proportions after 1947, its origins go back to the middle of the 19th century; complications started growing after 1900. Meanwhile, the nationalist movement of India began to effect the political struggle in Ceylon in various ways. The traditional and cultural ties, political and economic bonds, and the pulls exerted by the demographic factor tended to bring India and Ceylon closer. This tendency was sharply underlined by the almost revolutionary changes in Ceylon's politics in 1956.

In this work detailed references have been made to the historical links uniting Ceylon and India in a common cultural zone. This has been unavoidable. The ethnic, religious, and linguistic elements together with elements of Fine Arts, dress, beliefs and customs in both countries have, more or less, a common source. The differences which on the surface look formid-

able are really speaking the outcome of our own indifference. It is, therefore, necessary to emphasize that with proper understanding of the Indo-Ceylon political and cultural traditions we may be able to create a climate of trust and confidence in which the existing problems may be better understood and a workable solution found. That is why very considerable space in this work is devoted to the analysis of the historic ties between India and Ceylon.

In planning this work the suggestions and advice of Sir Ivor Jennings, the former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon and later the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University (U.K.) have been of immense help to me. The present arrangement of chapters is based on his suggestion. I have been in constant touch with him over the years and his comments have been of inestimable value to me. I am, therefore, extremely grateful to him.

In the execution of the project I have greatly benefitted by the comments and advice of Professor A.B. Lal, my Adviser. He took pains to read minutely every chapter of this work. I must put on record my sincere thanks to him.

This work would not have been possible but for the generous grant of Rs 1,000/- given by India's University Grants Commission and made available to me by Dr. Balbhadra Prasad, the present Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University, in February 1963. Without Dr. Prasad's very positive interest in my research work, it would have been impossible for me to go to Ceylon and collect useful material. I am very much indebted to him.

I must also thank those gentlemen in India and Ceylon who

spared some of their precious time and granted interviews to me. Their names are mentioned in the note on Sources and Bibliography given at the end. Many points I discussed with my friend Sri A.D. Pant and I am grateful to him for many useful suggestions. My student Dr. K.K. Mishra (Politics Department) and my friend, Dr. Lekh Raj Singh (Geography Department) helped me in checking references. My younger brother, J.K. Gupta prepared the maps for this work. My wife helped me greatly by translating numerous passages from Sanskrit texts. Last, though not the least, I must mention the name of the gentleman, Sri P.L. Gaur, who sat with me patiently for months and took down shorthand notes and prepared the first draft. I am heavily indebted to all of them.

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CHAPTER 1

INDO-CEYLON RELATIONS : THE DEMOGRAPHIC FACTOR.

§ I GENERAL

Ceylon appears on the map like a pendant dangling from the apex of the triangular land mass which constitutes India and Pakistan. It is a pear-shaped Island with a mountain core slightly south of centre and an area of just over 25,000 Sq. miles. It lies south-east of the southern tip of India to which it was once joined and to which it is still almost connected by a chain of Islands and sand banks. The connecting Palk Strait is, in fact, so shallow that the steamer service between Dhanushkodi in India and Talai Mannar in Ceylon operated regularly on schedule throughout the 2nd World War - there was no point in concealing the time of sailing because the water was too shallow for submarines to operate in it[1].

Indeed, geographically as well as culturally and economically Ceylon seems to be a part of that region which is termed India. To an observer there does not seem to be much difference between Madras and Colombo. Much of Southern India[2] is a warm, moist and muggy environment in which plant growth is

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1. The ferry that plies this Strait makes a one-way trip of only 18 miles. At the southern end, the Strait is barred by a chain of sandy shoals and rocky islets, called Adam's or Rama's Bridge.
2. The Deccan, in its generic sense, consists of India south of the Vindhyas. It was roughly divided into two sections by the River Krishna and its tributary the Tungabhadra. To the south of the river was the region generally called South India which was divided in ancient times into Chola, Paniya and Kerala. There was a fourth region in the north-west, the Mysore Plateau. In the course of this thesis we shall henceforth call this part South India, and the region to the north of the River Krishna, the Deccan. The river Godavari divided the eastern part of the Deccan into two sections and they were called Vengi and Kalinga. G.C.Mendis: Ceylon Today and Yesterday. p.20. Also see J.E.Spencer: Asia East by South - A Cultural Geography. p.171.

rapid, and one in which early man probably found it difficult to cope with the plant world around him. The same is true of Ceylon also which has many characteristics similar to the nearby areas of southern India: a plateau structure, the surface of which has been eroded into a complex hill-land with a broad coastal low land; a tropical monsoon climate with high temperatures the year around and heavy rainfall at certain seasons; tropical and monsoon forests on the uplands and scrub and grass on the low lands; and a dense population devoted to rice-dominated subsistence agriculture[1]. As long as man, in this part of the world, was content to gather its products, the plant world was a productive one. There were some good spots here, but none of them very large, and their complex of conditions was less useful than that of some other regions. In contrast, it may be stated that the highlands of northern India are a difficult land scape. The resemblance between Ceylon and South India is so great indeed that the Island, though separated by sea from India (only by about 30 miles), is geographically a projection of the Deccan. The wet zone of Ceylon is a projection of the Malabar region, and the dry zone of the Coromandel region. At the same time it is far away from all other lands on the west, the east and the south. Whether we examine the racial types, the religious systems, the languages, the literature, the architecture,

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1. Ginsburg, N. (Ed): The Pattern of Asia. 1958. p.663.

sculpture and painting, the political system, the economic conditions or the social structure, we see a close affinity between India and Ceylon. This affinity has been recognised by those who have made a study of conditions in India as well as Ceylon. In 1801 when the Island was about to be made a Crown Colony, Henry Dundas, the Secretary of State, considered what system of government should be adopted in Ceylon. There were two main systems of government among the British colonies at that time. One was found in some of the West Indian islands, where most of the settlers were British. The other was found in the colonies which had been captured from the French, and the settlers were mainly non-British. But Dundas decided to adopt neither system in Ceylon. He realized how similar the conditions of Ceylon were to those of India and wrote to Governor North :

> " On the present resumption by His Majesty of the temporary power of interference in the affairs of Ceylon formerly delegated to the East India Company it was far from being proposed to assimilate that Island or its Government to our colonies in the West Indies. But on the contrary whatever experience has shown to be politically wise in the Government of the British Territory on the Continent of India and appears, as is the case in this instance, applicable to the situation in Ceylon, it is the inclination of His Majesty's Government to preserve or to adopt"1.

This similarity between India and Ceylon was also noticed by others. In 1831 Colebrooke, one of the Commissioners sent from England to report on the Government of

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1. Wellesley MSS, 13,866. The National Archives of Ceylon, Nuwara Eliya.

Ceylon, considered a knowledge of Ceylon helpful for an understanding of India. "Although administered by the Crown the Island of Ceylon was originally a Hindu province", he wrote, "and from not having been subject to the inroads of the Mohamedans, it offers at this day the most perfect example to be met with of the ancient system of Hindu government. A short analysis, therefore, of the system may be useful not only with reference to the particular interests of Ceylon but in elucidation of some questions of considerable importance in relation to the British Settlements in India"[1]. In short, Ceylon is, in many respects, a miniature of India, and it is not surprising that in a time of national and cultural revival, whatever objections may exist on political grounds, Ceylon should turn once more to India for guidance rather than to a Union of South Asian and South-East Asian countries. There are, of course, differences and distinctive features which must be noticed. For example, though Buddhism ceased to be prominent in India many centuries ago, it remains the dominant religion in Ceylon. Also in recent centuries plantation or estate agriculture has developed in Ceylon and has given the Island's economy a distinctive character quite in contrast to that of southern India. Some of these distinctive features have been due to the isolation afforded by a narrow strait, only 22 miles of shallow water. Thus different civilizations, some originally with strong Indian ties, have flourished and developed

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1. Colebrooke Report. Ceylon Order. 54,122. The National Archives of Ceylon, Nuwara Eliya.

on lines divergent from those of their Contemporary Civilizations on the mainland.

$ 2. The Village Life.

The geographical closeness and propinquity of Ceylon to South India brings into sharp relief many interesting factors. Just as India is a land of villages and small towns, so is Ceylon. The 1941 Census tabulated some 6,58,000 settlements in India excluding Ceylon; this implied that about 90 per cent of the people lived in villages. In Ceylon in 1900 only 7 per cent of the population lived in cities. By 1947 the urban population of Ceylon was only 15.3 per cent of the total[1]. The largest city of Ceylon was Colombo which today has a population of 4,00,000; Nuwara Eliya has only 14,000 souls. During the period which we are surveying in this work, more than 80 per cent of the people lived in villages. There does not seem to be any fundamental difference between a Ceylon village and a village in South India. Both are cluster villages in shape and form, with only occasionally and elongated shoe-string or other shape definitely related to some local landscape stimulus. According to one authority, this feature goes far back into early Indian settlement history[2]. Within the village, narrow and irregular lanes often ending in blind alleys are the rule. When I visited Ceylon in March 1963, I took care to go round sample villages in different parts

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1. Economic and social developments of Ceylon (A survey 1926-1954. Issued by the Ministry of Finance, Colombo).
2. J.E. Spencer: op.cit. p.183.

of the Island, and I was struck by the similarity in the lay-out of the villages here with the villages that I saw in South India as well as the Deccan. In the often invaded north-west the cluster is tight and presents a protective solid outer-wall, though newer villages established in the last two centuries often are more open. The western influence, I think, largely accounts for this difference. Normally villages are not walled, but they have around them strips or patches of uncropped common land on which animals are tethered, crop thrashing is done, tools are stored and manure heaps are piled for fuel storage. Around the village in fairly close order are grouped the fields and gardens. Field patterns are irregular and have been developed according to various local criteria. While in North India the field system appears to be somewhat inefficiently laid out with considerable waste space and a certain amount of sheer disorder, this aspect is conspicuously missing from those parts of South India and Ceylon where plantation crop like tea, coffee and rubber have been grown under occidental planning[1]. The Sinhalese village like its South Indian counterpart is a very unpretentious institution having a few mud-built huts, an assorted growth of trees, chiefly coconut and Jak, and a common well. The number of individual houses varies from ten upwards. The population is never very great. The villages in the jungle are never permanent settlements but passing phases of the rural topography fluctuating with the growth and development of

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1. The Geographical Review. Vol.44. 1954. p.27?

adjacent, suburban cities. Near paddy fields and waterways one generally finds a village, its land with their assorted plantations being inhabited by groups of related folk. Thus a village is a social unit interlinked by economic and kindred ties, keeping unbroken relations with other villages for marital, economic and other social requirements[1]. The situation of each village differs according to the natural zone. For example, in the arid zone a few dark huts with a miserable and sickly population live in complete isolation from the rest of their folk. The parched soil affords no scope for cultivation. Few seasonal crops are grown. The dry zone village shifts in relation to the water supply and food crops. The huts are not arranged according to any preconceived plan demanded by custom, climate or necessity. They serve as convenient semi-permanent shelters affording protection from rain and beasts, and privacy at night[2]. In the wet zone the villages bear a more settled appearance and are actually so. Little islands, remote nooks and corners, raised lands, adjoining wet fields invariably form settlements. Owing to the sudden inundations of the lowlands experience has certainly taught the villagers the advantage of settling on elevated land surfaces. Although rare, the writer knows of actual instances where a village may get completely encircled with water from a swelling river as to be almost starved[3]. However, in the hill zone

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1. Farmer, B.H: Pioneer Peasant Colonization in Ceylon. 1957. p.79.
2. Hulugalle, H.A.J: Ceylon. 1949. p.12.
3. Also see Ludowyk, E.F.C: The Story of Ceylon. 1962.p.49.

it is either the valley below or the slope of a hill that affords suitable space for the growth of a village. This necessity compels a certain arrangement in the erection of the huts. The upcountry villages are more compact and in close proximity to a flowing stream. The hill tops are seldom inhabited. But the slopes of hills provide commanding positions with a pleasing prospect of the landscape below.

The Sinhalese village, like its counter-part in India, derives its name[1] in a variety of ways such as geographical features, names of trees, rivers or adjoining hills. A village derives its name also from its proximity to a prominent landmark. A legend or historical fact may help to give a name to a village. Examples are: Bopitiya[2], Nagoda[3], Uragoda[4], and Bentota[5]. Whatever the site may be, the house in most instances is determined by the natural environment and status of the owner. The construction may differ, yet the material used in its erection is more or less the product of the environment. The general plan of a Sinhalese village house is not much different one from another. It would be true to say that the local site

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1. De Lanerolle, Julius-J.R.A.S.;Vol.XXXI, No.83, p.511.
2. Bopitiya, for example, is from "Bo" tree which is worshipped by Buddhists in Ceylon.
3. This is from "Nag" or "Nagas" the serpent worshippers tribe in Ceylon. They are found in this village.
4. This is from "Ura" which means fere. In Hindi Mela.
5. This is from Ibn Batuta who visited Ceylon in 1344 and stayed in this village for 6 days. Since then, it is known as Bentota.

supplies everything from the commencement up to completion. The house is a direct product of the environment with the result that it agrees well and harmonises with the natural landscape. The timber, mud, and thatch are obtained from the immediate vicinity. But with the introduction of polished tiles, or corrugated iron sheeting the village houses have lost their coolness and harmony. Many a house has completely spoilt the landscape and became an eye-sore. Two small windows and one door would provide all the ventilation and sun-light[1]. An open verandah stretching for the full length of the house contains a raised platform on which the aged grandfather or the males sit and gossip during day or sleep at night. A single door leads to the one and only room used by the women and children for sleeping or resting. This leads to the kitchen which is almost always full of smoke. The hearth consists of three stones whilst above it is a raised reed platform for depositing kitchen utensils, paddy and other possessions. More windows are not favoured. The walls are built of wattle and daub or planks. The roof is thatched with straw or cadjan. The walls of mud or wood reach right up to the roof. Furniture was rare until the thirties of the present Century; a mat or a stool are even now the popular seats. The clothes and jewellery are safely deposited in wooden or reed boxes. Pillows which are used are almost black owing to a thick coating of dirt, dust, and

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1. In the Deccan flimsy farmsteads often are surrounded by thorn fences. Everywhere in the villages the usual house consists of two rooms or less, mud floors are almost universal, windows are small or absent, and decorative features are few in number.

oil. Art is appreciated to the extent that bright colours please the eye[1].

The unclean and insanitary state of the village strikes a depressing note at the very first sight. Frequent visits help to remove the original gloom and dislike by a gradual process of blunting the keen sense of an observant critic. After a short time one begins to complain less and criticise less. Many a village by its very natural situation defies modern sanitary overhauling. Poverty and a proverbial conservatism generate a resistance to change. Beyond the actual house few care to keep the place clean. The very rains that help to cleanse the village contributes to its squalor. Leaches begin to reappear. Reptiles specially snakes are thrown on to the land by rain and floods. The village puts forth fresh vitality but presents a picture of gloom and neglect. Although the domesticated animals are allowed to stray anywhere at their own sweet will, the villagers feel greatly offended if any of their cattle or dogs is molested. Despite repeated efforts to prevent the straying of cattle and dogs no improvement can be seen. The house-holders are, however, somewhat attached to their animals since they express genuine sadness at their loss. The crow is the proverbial scavenger. His work is lightened by dogs and pigs. This phase of the village is fading away. During 1931-47 an honest effort was made in a systematic manner to organise sanitary units.

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1. Smith Vincent, A: A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon. 1911. p.219.

A campaign was launched to teach the children through schools, and others through organised exhibitions and lectures the benefits of hygienic living. The results, however, were not very satisfactory.

The life in a Ceylonese village, as in an Indian village, is an unimpressive monotonous cycle punctuated by only a religious festival, social event or an annual pilgrimage. A "bali" ceremony or a devil dance supplies light entertainment. The majority of peasants are paddy cultivators. A number of younger men and women do irregular work in the tea and rubber plantations. A stigma was attached to manual labour owing to the traditional system of free service for the king ("rajakariya") but after 1910 more and more sought manual paid labour[1]. However, the older generation still prefers farming, two seasons being recognised as yala (September to March) and maha (March to September). A "meda" (intermediate) cultivation is also known in certain districts. There is no strict line of division between male and female labour. Nevertheless, a sensible understanding prevails as to what is man's work and what is woman's. Despite the physiological disabilities of womankind the Sinhalese village depends most on her industry and perseverance for its continuation. She is indeed the breadwinner of the family. Bearing children is an annual event. Rearing them is also her main job. Amidst a heap of other activities these almost regular duties are thrust on her. Obtaining food,

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1. For a detailed account of Rajakariya refer to Colvin R.De Silva: Ceylon under the British Occupation. Chapter XIII. pp.385-413. Codrington's Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon gives useful information. Also see de Lanerolle's rejoinder in J.R.A.S.XXXIV.pp.199ff.

gathering firewood, and cooking food are all a part of her regular work. And she certainly manages with the assistance of a member or two of her own household. She is brave and bears all hardships. Every individual in a household functions as a part of the machinery of labour[1].

Being primarily a cultivator the peasant, both in India and Ceylon, devotes his whole time and attention to agricultural pursuits during the season. In Ceylon, the wife and any grown-up boys and girls work in the tea or rubber plantations. The growing generation of young men dislike work but prefer a life of ease and indolence. The girls help to increase the income by reaping grass for sale at the '<u>boutique</u>'[2]. The aged grand parents act as advisers and caretakers whilst the smaller girls look after the infants when the mother is away at work. The smaller boys tend the cattle and roam the village in search of berries and fruits. The majority of boys and girls attend school through compulsion. The parents are fined if the children fail to do so. As in India it is the wife's duty in Ceylon to prepare the food and run the home. The husband shows himself at mealtime even though he has himself done nothing to help obtain the food. The housewives meet

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1. Percival, Capt. Robert : An Account of the Island of Ceylon 43. Also see Ribeiro's History of Ceylon Translated by P.E.Pieris. 1909. pp.19-25.
2. Fr. A shop, tradesman's stock. <u>Mandi</u> or <u>Peenth</u> in India.

in the woods during fire wood gathering expeditions and gossip around the village well. Many a scandal is broadcast and many a romance takes place at the well. Married women enjoy a fair measure of freedom in their village. Extra-village movements require the husbands' approval. The maidens are not permitted to move about freely. A younger brother or sister should accompany them. Even the married women are accompanied by a younger companion lest they be alone. Preferential treatment is meted out to the women as being the delicate sex (babalat etto) during journeys and pilgrimages. They are also shown great respect. Whilst on journeys it is the traditional practice for the women to walk behind the men. Lighter loads and the children are carried by the women. The women are also loved by the men who take a certain pride in seeing their women well dressed and ornamented. As neighbours the women get on amicably so long as friendly relations prevail. But bitter quarrels ensue during which heated words are exchanged and foul abuse is showered in continuous torrents lasting for hours. The men seldom resort to verbal expressions of hatred. They finish the feuds with a knife in which the early striker invariably succeeds. Quarrels are picked up for the flimsiest cause. Litigation has become a regular pastime in which the villager, both in India and in Ceylon, loses most of his time, money and self-respect[1].

In 1946, the average number of persons per village

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1. Mills, L.A.: Ceylon under British Rule (1933) pp.47-48.

in Ceylon was 283. Of course there were variations. In 1937, in the village of Kulupana in the Kalutara district, there were 453 persons; in Mimanapalana the number was 1131 persons; in Suruwila 204 persons. The number of families also varies from village to village. This position has continued even after 1947. The family has all along been the unit of society both economically and socially. This means that when a person in the village earns an income, it is considered part of the family income. His expenses, property and debt were also considered as family expenses, property and debt[1]. Here money did not enter into economic life so much as it did in the towns. A farmer probably got a good part of his income in kind, e.g. in paddy; and a portion of his expenses were met by giving things in exchange. For example, he paid his rent for the land he used for cultivation in kind - usually paddy. In the village, if a person is a labourer, his wages may even now be paid in kind, e.g. a rubber tapper may get a certain weight of the rubber he helps to produce or a coconut plucker may get his wages in coconuts[2]. Village life was also marked by its high degree of self-sufficiency. Villagers produced things for use in the home rather than for sale. No village, however, can be completely self-sufficient in the modern world. With the development of railways and roads, village people could sell more of their products in the towns and cities, and they buy many things from the towns; but even now in the villages the people produce for themselves more of the things they need than people in the

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1. Ibid., p.49.
2. Ibid., p.51.

towns[1]. The spirit of helping one another is also very marked in village life. People can collect firewood from one another's gardens; cattle graze wherever there is any unfenced grass; a family owning a well will allow other families to draw water from it. Perhaps as a result of this habit and also due to other economic reasons, one finds the practice of joint-ownership in the villages. Land, houses, a domestic animal or even a jak tree may be owned in common[2].

§ 3

THE ECONOMIC FEATURES OF THE CEYLONESE VILLAGE : STRIKING SIMILARITIES WITH INDIAN VILLAGES.

The economic features of the Ceylonese village in the period 1900-1947 are similar to those of a village in India. Most villages in Ceylon have agriculture as their main occupation. There are several agricultural occupations, the chief of which is paddy growing. In a village even now about half the people earn their living by agriculture. Some earn their living by handicrafts; others by trade; yet another group by fishing. This means that in a village one could see farmers, labourers, craftsmen like blacksmiths, carpenters, goldsmiths, boutique-keepers, carters, brick and tile makers, a baker, a headman and several others. A village farmer cultivated a small plot of land, generally between ½ and 1½ acres in area. Very often he did not own the land himself; in that case he rented it out from a person who had more than he could cultivate or from

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1. Ibid., p.56.
2. Elliot, C.W.B. : The Real Ceylon. (1938). p.78.

one who did not want to cultivate himself. If he owned the land he did not pay rent; if he did not own the land he generally paid about one half of the produce as rent. The latter was called the "ande" system. Even now, before the sowing season starts, the farmers let their lands lie in water to make the soil softer. After some time the soil is hoed by means of "mannoties"[1], and then the plough is used to turn the soil. When the soil is well prepared, the seed paddy is sown broadcast[2]. Often the villager will not have the seed paddy himself. In that case he borrows it from another on the promise of paying the amount back with 50 per cent interest. The cultivation of paddy requires a great deal of labour. A farmer and his family may not be enough to do all the work. Very often one family is helped by other families in its work and in turn gives its labour when other families need it. The village, therefore, lives largely on mutual assistance. In a village one often found some people owning a few acres of rubber or of coconut. Coconut is not grown according to any particular system here; a house may have a few coconut trees in its compound or in the surrounding garden. The coconut is used for a variety of needs such as cooking, thatching, rafters, oil, and so on[3].

Many coastal villages engage in fishing. In the

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1. An agricultural implement.
2. Ibid., p.81.
3. Weerawardana, M.I. : Ceylon and her Citizens. 1956.pp.9-10.

Chilaw district the fishing season is from October to May. During the rest of the year fisherfolk go to other fishing centres or stay at home to mend the boats and nets. In the fishing season, the fisherfolk go out to sea to fish. There are three types of boats they use[1]. The "thennama" or "catamaran" is a floating raft made by tying a few logs together, and is used for fishing close to the coast. The "oruwa" is a dug-out canoe in which people can go as far as 20 miles away from the coast. An "oruwa" generally leaves land at dawn and returns before dark. The "pada" boat is a flat-bottomed boat which is used for operating drag-nets near the shore. The fisherfolk do not only fish in the sea; sometimes they catch fresh-water fish also. They are engaged in selling fish as well as in catching them. After 1947, however, most of the selling of fish was taken over by "mudalalis"[2], who have more money to invest in the business. The digging of nuts is a common site in the coastal areas of Ceylon during the season[3].

§ 4.

CITY LIFE IN INDIA AND CEYLON.

Just as the physical lay-out of the villages in Ceylon closely resembles with the contours of a village in South India, the city life in Ceylon also is not very much

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1. Ibid., p.11.
2. This means a trader, a middleman. In Hindi a Dalal. See Vijayatunga: The Isle of Lanka, Ceylon. p.214.
3. Lord Holden: Ceylon. (1939). p.112.

different from a city like Madras. For administrative purposes Ceylon is divided into 9 provinces, with the most populated area in the west, round the capital, Colombo, which in 1946 had a population of 3,62,074, and where the port handled two million tons of cargo a year. Colombo, however, has been artificially constructed by means of a concrete break-water and closing the roadstead, said to be the seventh largest in the world in 1947. The second largest city is Jaffna (whose population in 1946 was 62,543) in the Northern (Tamil) Province with a small port. Kandy (51,266) has been the capital of the Central Province and is famous for the Temple of Tooth. This is closely rivalled by Moratuwa (50,698) and Kotte (40,218), both in the Western Province. Trincomalee (32,507) is a naval base with one of the finest and largest land-locked harbours in the world. Galle (49,009) in the south is a small natural harbour for ships of the freighter class, which, until overshadowed by the building of Colombo harbour at the end of the 19th century was the main port of Ceylon and the calling point for steamers on their way to the Far East. In most of these cities one found large numbers of manual workers in industries like Mining, Electricity and Gas; there are today transport workers and engineering workers, traders, merchants and professional people. In the capital city of Colombo are found the big government offices and a large number of shops and commercial firms with impressive looking shop-assistants, sales-girls and clerks. The town as it stood in 1947, and as it stands even today, is entirely the

product of the British enterprise. The Sinhalese imprint is scarcely discernible. Indeed its lay-out is as generous as that of any city in the world. Architecturally, it is almost devoid of interest; and as soon as one lands, one is impressed by the pleasant solidity of the commercial and shopping section known as the Fort - so called because it is built on the site of the old Portuguese fort, which stood there four centuries ago. The entire railway system of Ceylon radiates from Colombo. In most of the cities of Ceylon one is impressed by the trams, the buses and the josting crowds. Every city has its own slums. The tempo of life is much too fast and it is not surprising that drinking became a popular pastime. Marital fidelity is apt to stray under the stresses of lovely surroundings, the heat, the tempo of life and too much alcohol. Certainly the percentage of marriages broken up in the hot-house atmosphere of Colombo is high and the level of destructive gossip higher[1].

As far as the city of Jaffna is concerned, it has always fundamentally been different in its origin and purpose from Colombo. It is part and parcel of the soil. The inhabitants are mostly Tamils and the whole city is a unique testimony to their capacity for hard work. According to one observer: "It is an astonishing place, the Holland of the East, and its people have acquired very much the same reputation for thrift, common sense and indefatigable energy that the Scots have won for themselves in every

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1. Ibid., p.98.

quarter of the world"[1]. The Malabaris held Jaffna from earliest times and apart from sporadic incursions by the Sinhalese it has been a Tamil stronghold for over two thousand years. Galle, in the extreme south of the Island, is far more beautiful and colourful than Jaffna and historically fully as interesting, but it presents an almost complete contrast. Here one does not find any considerable Indian influence. It is still essentially a Dutch town architecturally built in and around the fort which dominates the town.

Trincomalee which in recent months has figured so prominently in the Indian consciousness, is on the east coast overlooking the Bay of Bengal and is the most wonderful and beautiful natural harbour in the world[2]. The entrance is so guarded by two headlands as to be absolutely impregnable by any known methods of warfare before the advent of the atom bomb, and the inner harbour is so vast that the whole of the British fleet in 1947 at the time of its full majesty and power might have sought and obtained refuge within. It is one of the most curious accidents of history that although a naval station for many years, Trincomalee has never achieved real importance at any time in history as a city, a naval base, or as a commercial centre, presumably due to the fact that so far the current trade and enterprise in maritime world has always swept from west to east. By such small threads does the fate of nations hang. It is hard

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1. Harry Williams: Ceylon Pearl of the East. 1951. p.332.
2. Vijayatunga,J : The Isle of Lanka, Ceylon. p.6. He writes that "Trincomalee is a great asset to Ceylon in bargaining with foreign powers. It is a great asset to foreign powers as well".

to conjecture what might have been the course of events in Lanka had Trincomalee been opened in the west coast instead of living in the wide-spread beauty of the east. After October 1962, it was widely felt in India that the Chinese might cast a tempting eye on this wonderful harbour. This fear naturally created serious misgivings. Apart from the strategic value of the harbour from the Indian security point of view, Trincomalee has a unique place in the history of Indo-Ceylon cultural background. Here there is a huge banyan tree which is said to be capable of affording shelter for one thousand people; this tree is supposed to be a brother of another banyan tree in South India so vast that its shadow, at mid-day, is 400 yards in circumference.[1] It is said that Trincomalee harbour was once the site of a volcano which, reversing the usual process, sank into the earth. The supporters of this theory point to the hot springs of Kanya, eight miles north of the harbour, as evidence, but the Tamils have a more satisfying, if less probable explanation of this phenomenon[2]. According to them King Ravana, during his long war with Vishnu, was informed by that deity that Kanya, virgin mother of the ten-headed King of Ceylon, was dead. Ravana naturally had to set about the task of performing the necessary obituary services for the beloved dead, and Vishnu, to help him - and incidentally to accomplish his main design of delaying

1. Walpola Rahula: History of Buddhism in Ceylon. 1956.p.X XV.
2. This was repeated to me by practically every educated Tamil whom I met in Ceylon.

him - caused hot springs to burst out of the ground for the giant's use. And there they remain.

As one comes to Kandy, the romantic hill capital occupying a dead central position in the Island, one is struck by a great deal of affinity between this place and an ordinary Indian hill station. All round there is the "tulsi" plant, so that from a distance the entire area appears to be covered by it[1]. The site of this city is superb. The Mahawelliganga[2] curves in a giant V in the hills and the town stands almost surrounded by water, "a necklace of pearls" in the poetic words of the Sinhalese. All round, despite the encroaching uniformity of tea estates, sharp crags and steep mountains rise, a vast amphitheatre of hills, forest-clad to their peaks, and as if to emphasize the supreme importance of water in the philosophy of the island people there is a splendid artificial lake around which the tree-bordered drives and promenades of the town curve, not only at lake level but again high up the hill-sides. The small island in the centre of this lake once accomodated the King's "harem". There can be little doubt that this prolific valley sheltered hill people from earliest times, but the first mention of Kandy as a settlement of any importance at all is during the reign of Parakrama Bahu III in the 13th century, when a temple was built to give sanctuary to the Tooth Relic. The fact that the Tooth found

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1. My attention to this was drawn by the Professor of Persian at the Peradeniya University, who was so kind as to take me to the interior of Kandy.
2. The Ceylonese worship this river as we worship "Ganga" in this country.

a permanent home there gave Kandy its importance to the Buddhist hierarchy and attracted the kings to this elysium as the seat of royalty. In fact, however, it was not until the end of the 16th century - recent history in the long story of the Sinhalese - that Wimala Dharma, following upon the defeat of Raja Singha and the end of Cotta as the capital city of the Island, declared Kandy to be the capital. This was in 1592, when all that then existed of the town was a handful of huts in the hollow subsequently filled to make the modern lake[1]. Many in Ceylon do not regard Kandy as a sacred city at all. As Vijayatunga writes :

> " A sacred city it never was and the sooner it gives up its pretence at being one, the better. In fact, I believe that during the week that the Sacred Tooth Relic was last exposed, the slaughter houses run by Muslims and Singhala Buddhists did a thriving trade" 2.

Wimala Dharma, as may be remembered, lived through troublous times and saw his capital burned down not once but several times, both by the Portuguese and the Dutch. When the British came into the historical stage of Ceylon and took Kandy in 1815, the only buildings with any claim to antiquity at all were the Royal Palace and the Temple of the Tooth, both beyond contempt in an architectural sense. Much has been said and continues to be said to visitors about the antiquity of this valiant centre of resistance, but the truth is that what remains of the royal palace was

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1. Interesting stories are current in Ceylon about this lake. When one hears some of these, one is reminded of the Jamuna Bank at Vrindaban near Mathura in U.P.
2. op. cit. p.229.

not built until the year 1600, for Portuguese prisoners were used to build it. To this circumstance is due the architectural novelty - by Sinhalese standards - of the octagonal tower of the Dalada Maligawa, but it cannot be claimed that either of these buildings has any real merit. As for the rest of the town, until the advent of the British it was a collection of hovels, for the Kandyan kings, in their jealous preservation of their own glory, would not permit houses to possess windows or tiles and even forbade them to be whitewashed. The British, when they entered Kandy in 1815, were astonished at the pitiable little collection of huts and sheds which constituted the legendary city of Kandy. Almost the only part of the original palace with any claim to dignity or grandeur is the old audience hall of the kings, now a court of justice, and even that, in its present form, is not of earlier date than 1783[1].

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THE ESTATES.

The people of Ceylon do not live only in the villages and the cities and the towns; a large group of people live on the estates also. In 1946, there were 8,51,359 persons living on the estates; and the estates consisted mainly of tea, rubber and coconut plantations. Of these persons the Indian Tamils were the largest group and formed 78.2 per cent of the total. Tea plantations are found in the hilly districts of Ceylon; and coconut estates in the coastal belt of the west. The largest

1. H.W.Codrington: A Short History of Ceylon 1947. pp.134 and 135.

number of estates workers live in the tea and rubber estates and are mainly Indian Tamils. Thus in Ceylon there are three types of communities - urban, rural and estate. The people of the Island are not particularly active; in fact an ordinary Sinhalese labourer is reputed to be idle and sluggish[1]. The climate of the Low Country is hot, particularly from March to May the average mean temperature ranging from $79^{\circ}F$ to $82^{\circ}F$, combined with a high degree of humidity in the wet zone. All round the mountain core and particularly in the north are flat plains, and round the coast coconut-fringed lagoons merge into a shallow sea. The highest peaks in central mountain mass rise to over 8,000 ft, but the foot-hills are not very extensive, and only a comparatively small proportion of the island as a whole is over 2,000 ft. The rainfall is governed by the position of the mountains. Ceylon lies in the direct path of both the South-West (June to October) and North-East (November to December) monsoons. In the extreme north and south, there are no mountains to break the monsoon clouds and the rainfall there is as little as 20 inches in the year. In the mountainous centre of the Island, and particularly on the south-western edge of the mountain core, the rainfall is very heavy and in places exceeds 200 inches. The rivers are short and useful for irrigation rather than communications[2]. The largest river in Ceylon, the Mahaveli, draining the eastern slopes of the mountains, falls into the sea

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1. They are learning to be more active now.
2. Cook, E.K.: A Geography of Ceylon. London. 1939. p.35.

near Trincomalee after a 206 mile course which, like that of all rivers in Ceylon, is navigable by small boats only in its lower reaches because of rapid upstream. Except for Malwatte (104 miles) no other river in Ceylon is 100 miles long. The southern most tip of the Island is only just 6½° north of the equator and there is, therefore, very little difference in temperature between winter and summer, along the coast, or between night and day. The average temperature at Colombo, for example, only varies between 79° in the coldest and 82° in the hottest month and the difference there between night and day is never more than 12°.

The nature of the terrain, the quality of climate, and the temperament of the people make Ceylon "potentially an agricultural paradise"[1]. The soil is immensely responsive although it is not particularly rich and is, therefore, a hard task master. From 1900 to 1947, the period of our survey, Ceylon continued to be completely at the mercy of an alien economy through no fault of her own. Two vast industries - tea with its ancilliaries, and rubber with its important by-products - have been the host upon which the rest of the agricultural activities of the Island went on only as parasites. Rubber seeds were imported from South America into the Island in 1876. Although in 1890 the planted area was only 300 acres, by 1947 it had increased to about 7,00,000 acres. Tapping coolies, highly skilled

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1. Bassett, R.H.: Romantic Ceylon. 1937. p.101.

Tamil men and women, must get up before day light and go out atonce into rubber forest due to be tapped. After rubber the most important crops are rice (for local consumption only), coconuts (for local consumption and export of the oil), tea (mainly for export, although the home demand is also met). Other crops are cacao (seeds yielding cacao and chocolate), cinnamon, citronella, tobacco, pepper, palmyra, areca nuts and oil seeds such as sesame. Vegetables for local use are grown in profusion and English Varieties of vegetables grow well on the hills. Rice, known as paddy before it is milled, is grown by Ceylonese on lands supplied with water through a large and efficient irrigation system of extensive artificial reservoirs or 'tanks', originally built by Sinhalese kings many centuries ago and restored by the British Government. Except in government farms and in the agricultural 'colonies' organised below the restored tanks, agricultural methods are still primitive, and fields are cultivated with an old-fashioned plough drawn by buffaloes. Mechanisation is handicapped by the small size of the individual rice fields and the difficulty of reaching them with motor vehicles, but modern techniques such as transplanting were introduced in 1937. The coconut tree, next to rice, is the most valuable crop, providing food drink, oil for cooking and burning, rope, cattle food, timber and thatch, while all nuts not required for internal use find a lucrative market in India in the form of copra and oil. About 1,800,000,000 nuts are produced annually, on 920,942

acres, of which 812,000 acres consist of village small-holdings and gardens [1]. Tea is grown mainly in the hills, on estates opened by British companies after the failure of the coffee crop, due to a pest in 1870s. The annual export of tea from Ceylon in 1946 was about 300,000,000 lbs. [2] The majority of the labourers on tea estates were Tamils from India, but every year a large number of Ceylonese are now taking to the work and replacing the immigrants.

In 1941 approximately 14,000,000 lbs. of citronella oil were exported to India, bringing in £ 200,000 to the Island. It is easy money, for the grass which produces the essence grows in the poorest of soils, requires almost no attention and receives no cultivation whatever. It is grown on the south coast of the Island between Matara and Tangalle, where the thick cover of coconut palms begins to thin out, fading into the jungle of the Eastern Province. Some thirty thousand acres of the grass have been planted along this coastal fringe, and rude distilleries press out the aromatic oil for the use of perfumers. These distilleries may be seen at frequent intervals along the road. There are over 70,000 acres of areca-nut palms in Ceylon. The produce of these slim, graceful and beautiful trees is all used internally in the Island or exported to India. The palm's slender stem, with its gracious feathery head, may be seen anywhere in the inhabited parts of Lanka,

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1. Census, 1946.
2. Ibid.

and the clusters of nuts just underneath the crown are prolific whether the tree receives cultivation or not. The produce exported to India alone was worth £ 100,000 in 1936 to the vendors of these much prized nuts, which go to form the delightful mixture of betel, areca and lime without which the lives of Sinhalese and Tamils alike would be empty[1].

The famous cinnamon of Ceylon has fallen from its high pedestal, not from any lessening of its excellence but by a change in the world's habits[2]. The spice that Moses was commanded to use in the manufacture of anointing oil has few uses now, but in 1936 there were said to be 26,000 acres of it under cultivation in small estates between Negombo - once the centre of the finest cinnamon in the world - to Matara in the south of the Island. Cinnamon needs moist air and heavy rainfall, with a light sandy surface soil and a heavier soil underlying it. This is to be found, as perhaps nowhere else in the world, along this strip of the coastal land, and although efforts were made to grow the spice further in land, the results were never as good as those obtained from the western seaboard.

Another agricultural product grown on a commercial scale in Ceylon is tobacco, a rough coarse leaf produced by vigorous but primitive cultivation in the northern peninsula. For the extension of this form of agriculture, there is real scope and the lack of many scientifically run estates in the Island is just one more example of laissez faire. The

1. Ibid., p.76.
2. Ibid., p.77.

enterprise of the Jaffna Tamils does not extend beyond the growth of tobacco and the manufacture of a cigar which suits the taste of the local population and of the peoples in India and Malaya. In 1947 some fifteen thousand acres were under cultivation, mainly in Jaffna, although the Dumbara Valley, near Kandy, grows tobacco on a fairly extensive scale. There are a few scattered, primitive holdings too along the banks of the Mahawallinganga close to Batticoloa, but they have no claim to serious consideration. That the industry could become a major one seems obvious from the results obtained by hard-working but rudimentary methods at present employed. Some 10,000,000 lb. of leaf were produced in 1943, a very considerable crop, and although the quality is coarse, the flavour is good. The attempts made some years ago to grow leaf with a more delicate flavour were entirely successful, but the product was not required by the local market or by the market in South India.

§ 6

THE PATTERN OF AGRICULTURE.

A brief survey of agriculture in Ceylon will be helpful to us in understanding the present culture of both Ceylon and South India and their common characteristics. So far as the general pattern of agriculture is concerned, it may be stated that a fundamental fact in both the countries is the low yield of crops. This may be attributed

to several factors - poor soil, soil erosion, little use of fertilizer, poor tools, poor cultivation techniques, a peasantry ignorant of beneficial practices, the increasing fragmentation of family holdings, voluminous pests, the irregular monsoon climate, and British imperialism. The farmer in India as well as in Ceylon is a somewhat careless operator. Between 1900 and 1932 there was hardly any improvement introduced in Ceylon agriculture, and the peasants did not benefit either in the application of scientific knowledge or in the use of modern machinery. There has not been much of an appreciable change even between 1932 and 1947. The farmer almost entirely depended on natural rains for irrigating his fields. The interesting result of this has been the tradition in Ceylon that the unknown forces which could cause considerable harm to agriculture should be guarded against by propitiation and magic charms. At every stage of his work, therefore, he has to observe set rituals, ancient customs and traditional beliefs. Lands are owned according to an established system of tenure handed down from ancient times[1]. As we stated earlier, there are two seasons called Yala and Maha (the former is from September to March, the latter from March to September). In some parts both seasons are worked whilst in others none is attempted. The whole field is split up into linear sections with a few small passages for

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1. De Lanerolle, J.D.-J.R.A.S., Vol.91- 1938. p.199. Also see Reimers,E.-J.R.A.S.,Vol.31, No.81. p.17 - Feudalism in Ceylon, and Codrington,H.W.- Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon. 1938.

water. Water received into a field from the rain, river or an irrigation channel is conserved by a system of temporary narrow dams arranged in such a manner as to enable the water to circulate freely. After a week or so when the mud is well soaked tilling commences in earnest and the seed must be sown before a certain period. Men work in the fields. The buffalo is employed in ploughing. Definite expressions mark the different stages of the work. (The general term used in turning the mud is "Mada Kateema")[1]. The first is the "puran Kateema". Then there is the "demeha keteema". The third is the "wepireema" which includes levelling and sewing the seed. When cattle are employed the field is ploughed once or twice (wediweema) and then levelled and sown. These terms are quite familiar to a peasant in South India.

The cultivation of a long neglected and abandoned field once more after a long time is known as "Asweddume". The cultivation of a field lain fallow for a few years is known as "puran keteema". The rough grass and weeds have to be turned out and deposited so as to get all vegetation under. This is quite a difficult labour and is carried out in beautiful long alignments, with the help of the "mammoty"[2]. The next stage of the work commences after a few days. It involves splitting and trampling the sods

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1. "Mada Keteema" means pounding the mud.
2. "Udella" in different shapes is used in different parts of the Island. The locally made ones are different from the imported article.

with the foot and the "mammoty". This is "demeha kateema". Some skip the second stage but complete the second and third together. The third stage is the process of further splitting up of the mud into smaller particles so as to form a sort of porridge. Finally, the mud porridge is levelled by a board drawn with a handle on the surface. Little runnels are cut in certain patterns for the circulation of the water in each "liyadda" (section).

When buffaloes are employed to draw the plough men have less work but people do not favour ploughing so much nowadays. But certain fields have to be ploughed when work is started after a period of lapse. One can hear the ploughman singing at his plough specially in the upland areas. The plough songs of the rustic folk resemble the Indian yodelling in tone, music and rhythm.

After the final levelling by either ploughing or mammoty and feet the field has to be sown the same day by one who is proficient in the art of scattering the seeds in a proportionate spread, neither more nor less. Every party has such a person. An interesting sight is the scattered groups of almost nude men, their brown bodies completely bathed in mud, with sometimes the heads only showing above the mud, busy with their work whilst the tropical sun reflects on their wet bodies as in a shining bronze mirror. The sight is reminiscent of the scenes one witnesses while travelling in a train from Madras to Dhanushkodi.

After sowing follows a period of comparative rest,

during which the cultivators seek other economic pursuits. The fields cannot be neglected. Irrigation systems have to be attended to. During the first few weeks the birds become a nuisance and cause destruction by eating up the seeds. The village lads find a good pastime in hitting together a pair of coconut shells and blowing flutes for driving the birds. Pests are also liable to cause damage when the plants are young. Women find much to do in transplanting, uprooting and weeding the fields. Stray cattles belonging to the owners or the neighbours can cause an equal amount of damage by eating the young plants or trampling upon them. During the flowering season, paddy birds and flies harm the fertility of the seeds by eating the young buds. When the seeds ripen, the wild boar and the elephant become the worst offenders. They cause utter destruction of extensive acres. The human element cannot be left out as thieves may cause as much harm as any other agent. Rains and floods out of season bring at times total destruction and even cause the whole field to disappear by removing the muddy surface with the current. The natural agents of destruction may be induced by anti-social magic or the curse of a god.

After about 3-4 months of anxious expectation the harvesting season draws near when the heart of the peasant begins to be filled with hopes of the realization of the fruits of his labour. Much activity prevails since the gathering of the harvest, if delayed, may lead to utter loss. It is a period of great expectations and much

ceremonial. Reaping begins when the ears of corn have turned golden in colour and the plant bends under the weight of the seed. Men and women assist in the reaping whilst the children help in the gathering. Special songs that are descriptive of the fields and paddy plants are sung by all who work. The bundles are heaped up in the shape of a circular hut[1] on a spot reserved for the threshing floor (kamatha). The bundles of straw placed on top act as a roof. Usually the threshing floor is the highest dry spot in the area. Sudden floods and thieves are the possible danger and men have to keep close watch[2].

From henceforth until the bringing home of the paddy the conduct, disposition and speech of those concerned assume a somewhat important bearing as on them depend to a large extent the final yield of paddy. The threshing and measuring are auspicious acts[3] beset with ritual and taboos. There is a popular belief that at the threshing floor paddy may be withheld or released by the guardians of the earth[4]. In some parts of the Island buffaloes are employed in threshing the paddy. The animals are driven round and round trampling upon the ears until the seeds drop out on to the mats placed under.

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1. The heap of the ears of corn is called a "Vikole".
2. Watch songs. Songs are sung during the nights in order to keep awake and some of these express the painful lot of a farmer.
3. Every act begins with worshipping the 10 directions, the measures and the paddy.
4. Bahiraya who are in charge of treasures and fertility of the earth and guard them in the common form of a hooded snake appear in the field meaning to do no harm.

The process of threshing once again reminds one of the South Indian landscape. The men experienced in threshing set out early in the morning in order to prepare the threshing floor by spreading the mats on the ground and erecting a special structure to serve as a roof and a hand support (kathura). Six or eight persons work at a time. No one is permitted to drink, chew, speak or perform any other irrelevant act. Strict purity of word, deed and thought should be observed. From the main heap handfulls are taken for threshing. The paddy so obtained (maduwan) is deposited in an under-layer of mats. This is repeated five times. After the fifth time a short interval is allowed for chewing, drinking and easing themselves. It is called the "paspawara". No mid-day meal is taken by some and the work continues until about 7 P.M. when about fifteen rounds would have been completed (pahalospolak). This is the end. Measuring with the "laha" or "kuruniya", i.e. measuring with a rod or weighing commences at about 9 P.M. It is then that the favours of the earth goddess are showered on the farmer by granting a continuous stream of paddy[1] which surpasses all expectations. One of the men presses the measure on to the heap of paddy. Two other persons standing on either side fill it up. The holder of the measure throws the grain twelve times over each shoulder on to mats placed behind until the whole heap is measured. Measuring should be continuous as any

1. Weedalla - The belief is that the "Bhuma" Devata (Bhumi = Earth) at times may bestow in unduly large yield on a righteous farmer. All farmers expect such a gift. The presence of a large cobra in the field is a sign of such a happening.

pause may bring the expected flow of grain to a stop. Other men stand behind to fill large bags[1]. Transporting the paddy home is undertaken as soon as possible either in carts or on the backs of men.

Before cooking the fresh rice various vows have to be fulfilled. Above all the seed paddy has also to be reserved. The Buddhist temple or the "Devale" comes in for a share of the first fruits[2]. A certain quantity is set aside for the village communal feast. As far as possible, the offerings are given in the form of milk rice. The householders themselves attach importance to the partaking of fresh rice. It is the final realisation of the peasant's labour and toil. It is also the day when a period of rest begins for the family. Rice is liberally cooked and eaten in plenty until all too soon the stocks are exhausted and the labour begins once more.

One of the most interesting but reprehensible forms of agriculture that one would find in Ceylon during the period under review is the so-called "Chena" cultivation. This has been described by one writer as "migratory agriculture"[3]. This kind of agriculture is found among the people who have a semi-nomadic life and possess a primitive type of culture. Along the Mountain Wall from Simla eastword and down to the bay of Bengal, in the Chota Nagpur upland, and in narrowing circles in South India, variations of hunting, gathering, and simple digging-stick agriculture

1. Muttamalu. These are made of strong reeds and hold ten to fifteen bags, i.e., 25 bushels each.
2. Perera, A.A. - Sinhalese Folk Lore, pp.5, 37.
3. Spencer, J.E.: Op. cit. p.192.

are still practised today by millions of people. In north India this simple pattern is known as Jhum; in Ceylon it is called as "Chēna". In fact the Sinhalese borrowed this form of agriculture from the Veddas who themselves in their turn learnt it from the Australoid stock that arrived from India. This we discuss in another chapter. The process of the Chena has been described by one authority as follows :

> " Thick forests [1] are selected as a Chena. The work is laboursome and dangerous. A patch of forest in extent two or three acres is picked out by a group of men in a village. The work of clearing the forests is begun during the dry season. The trees are felled and the jungle is cleared. A few large trees are left out for shade. Good timber is removed for sale. When the leaves have dried up the clering is set on fire. The whole mass of wood, leaves and creepers burn until their reduction to ashes. The burnt out area is fenced (2) in a special pattern which may be worthy of study from the ethnographical point of view. A watch hut is erected within the enclosed area as watching the chenas constitutes the most exacting task of this method of cultivation.
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> Quick crops requiring little moisture are sown in time to sprout up by the receipt of a few drops of rain. Some of the crops grown are paddy, kurakkan, amu, menari, maniec, sweet, potatoes, gourds, chillies, and a few other quick crops. If an individual cultivates a chena he decides to settle down with the family until the work ends for the season as that would save labour and anxiety. The same chena is cultivated for two or three years in succession until its fertility is completely exhausted when a new clearing in the adjoining forest is undertaken. Patches of jungle are cultivated in rotation. The chena land is left to run fallow for ten or twelve years when it is possible to return to the same plot over again" (3).

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1. Land privately owned or belonging to the government may be leased for Chena.
(2) Dandu-weta-timber palisade which can keep off large

This system is most harmful and is responsible for the elimination of some of the virgin tropical rain forests in Ceylon. Such an irregular economy neither contributes to the welfare of the Island nor does it call for any great skill on the part of the peasants. It was only after 1947 that the government started taking concrete steps with a view to putting a stop to this pernicious system.

Another form of agriculture which one finds in Ceylon is the terrace cultivation. It adds a distinct beauty to the landscape of the uplands. It is the artificial conversion of the hill-slopes into fields. One comes across this system both in the hills in South India and in the Simla range. By a very ingenious but simple device the waters running down the tops of hills are channelled in such a manner as to irrigate the patches of fields that rise in tiers from the base up to the summit. The narrow banks of each terrace are built up of mud and stones found nearby and the whole system is so cleverly built up as to give it a natural appearance. The water is collected in the uppermost terrace and is led to the next when the former is fully saturated. In gradual stages the whole extent of terraces is thus irrigated. Finally, the surplus water collects in the valley below where it helps to irrigate the fields which are cultivated according

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wild animals.

(3) Farmer, B.H.: "Agriculture in Ceylon". Geogr. Rev., Vol.XI. Also see Gordon East: The Changing World. Chap.XXI.

to the wet system of cultivation. This type of cultivation is possible only in the uplands and requires a great deal of delicate but laborous toil. The labour spent on it is more than recompensed not only in the yield but also in beauty patterning the whole surrounding area with the natural green contours that spread serpentwise in all directions. It is the only decorative feature that the labour of man has effected in a region where tea and rubber have found an abiding home[1].

$ 7

MINERAL WEALTH OF CEYLON

An important aspect of demography of Ceylon is the mineral wealth of the Island which has played a fairly important role in the cultural and economic relations between India and Ceylon. The minerals of economic importance in Ceylon have been plumbago or graphite, gem stones, ilmenite, iron, monazite and mica. Therium-producing monazite sands of Ceylon have already begun to play an import part in the atomic research presently conducted in this country. Between 1900-1947, these were used in making gas mantles. The gem industry, one of Ceylon's most romantic features, has been practised for centuries by digging pits 30 ft. deep down to the gem gravel. The principal area for gems is round Ratnapura, a name meaning

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1. This is based on my observations of Mahagastotte Estate Nuwara Eliya, and on the way to Haghalla Botanical Garden.

gem city. Ratnapura figures prominently in the history of Indo-Ceylon cultural relations.

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CEYLON - A PART OF INDIA's STRATEGY.

One is driven to the conclusion that Ceylon remains apart from India in a separatism that is aided by physical position. It is a country which is only 30 miles from India and which would have been seen by the Indian fishermen every morning as they sailed out to catch their fish. From the earliest times, therefore, the Island might have been occupied by those people in South India who understood how to sail[1]. Populated from South India, Ceylon has shared India's major cultural achievements. Today, most of the Sinhalese are Buddhist, following the missionary spread of Buddhism. During the last thousand years Indians have moved slowly into Ceylon, today composing almost 1/5th of the population. Britain has administered Ceylon independently of India, since acquiring the Island in 1796. A pattern of self-government was worked out from 1900 to 1947 unlike that used in India. A large number of people in Ceylon have, however, continued to feel a very special type of relationship between themselves and the people of India. When there was a serious food crisis in Ceylon in 1920, a delegation from Ceylon waited on Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy of India and urged that Ceylon

1. JRAS Vol.XXVIII. No.72. p.65.

should be treated not as a foreign country nor as on a par with other British possessions such as the Straits Settlements, Mauritius, South Africa and the Fiji islands, but as forming a part of India[1]. But under the British control a distinct individuality of Ceylon came into existence, so that it is unlikely that a political merger will take place in the very near future. The demographic pulls, however, tend to bring Ceylon and India very close. Once India became part of the British Empire during the course of the 18th century, it became necessary for the British to conquer and annex Ceylon also. It was from India that a policy of imperial expansion was planned. It was, as Panikkar writes, the "India-based strength of Britain, as a great Asiatic power that enabled it to force open the door of China...and project her political and economic power into the pacific"[2]. Ceylon, Burma and Malacca fell in quick succession in the post-Napoleanic period mainly as a sequel to British ascendancy in India. When India became free in 1947, the logic of this demographic principle rendered it impossible for the British to stay on the Island. If Ceylon ever falls into unfriendly hands, the security of India will be put in serious danger. The economic interest also keeps Ceylon and India tied together. The harbour of Trincomalee has a vital importance in the strategy of the Indian ocean. The British withdrawal from Ceylon and India left the Indian ocean with no major naval

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1. Memorandum on Indo-Ceylon Relations - 1940. p.2.
2. Asia and Western Dominance. p.95.

power. In 1947 it was, therefore, essential both for Ceylon and India to work in close co-operation; it was important for India particularly to build up a sizeable navy so that the vacuum created by the British withdrawal may be filled by ourselves because we have the biggest stakes in this region.

In fact the demographic factor in the relations between India and Ceylon is responsible for creating a widespread fear in some sections in Ceylon that on any future date a Chauvinistic government in India might attack Ceylon, and with the help of lakhs of persons of Indian origin who may act as a fifth column of India, may successfully conquer the Island and make it just a province of India. Really, there does not appear to be any basis for such fears. In modern times it is impossible, even for a country like the United States to attack Cuba, or for Communist China to invade Formosa. But what is important is to recognize that such a fear does exist in the subconscious of some Ceylonese leaders[1]. It must be remembered that the outstanding fact about Ceylon as far as race is concerned, is that for the last one thousand years there has been a majority race, the Sinhalese, and a strong minority race, the Tamils. During this part of Ceylon's history, before the coming of the Europeans, the two races remained distinct, were never united, and rarely did one

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1. This was the impression I gathered in my interviews with Sir John Kotelawala, Messrs R.G.Senanayake, Dudley Senanayake, K.M.P.Rajaratna, Felix Bandaranayake and several others. They often talked of "Indian Imperialism".

prevail against the other. Occasionally a single ruler was strong enough to have, at any rate, some control over the whole Island, but such control never lasted long. The two communities (this is a more apt word than race) have always been kept separate by language, religion and social customs. These differences were further accentuated by inferiated policies. Though in some parts of the Island until recently the Sinhalese and the Tamils lived peaceably side by side, they have never really mingled. Today there are no Sinhalese practising the Hindu religion, no Tamils who are Buddhists. Both Hinduism and Buddhism are highly tolerant religions, at least in theory, and co-exist comfortably, their supporters having a real respect for the other religion. But there is very little inter-marriage today; there may have been some in the past, but the evidence for this is not at all clear. Social customs remain stubbornly different, except for those who have become 'Westernised', particularly the members of both races who are Christians, and those whose education has been through the medium of the English language. It is probably true to say tht it is only among these (the Westernised section of the population) that there has grown up, yet, any true sense of Ceylon as a nation. The term 'Ceylonese' used to describe an inhabitant of Ceylon, has comparatively little real meaning to the mass of the population. It is used in legislation and in law, and has particular significance in the Ceylon Nationality Act of 1948. But until the average Ceylonese regards himself as such firstly, and only secondly as a Sinhalese or a Tamil, there can be little prospect of a Ceylonese nation in the

true sense of the word coming into being. As matters stand today, there may well be more likelihood of something like modern nations being formed in some of the tribally and linguistically divided countries of Africa, with their new independence, than in Ceylon[1].

The next chapter gives some account of the Island's early history, going into a limited amount of detail on the origin and character of the Sinhalese. For the moment it is enough to say that they claim to be, and probably are in the main, of Aryan origin, that they came from Northern India, that they have their own language, manners and customs, and that the great majority are Buddhist. The Tamils, in historical times, came from southern India. They are of the same race (Dravidian), speaking much the same language, (Tamil), having the same religion in much the same form, and having much the same customs, as some 50 million people in south India, most of whom are found in the State of Madras[2]. However, they are in some ways distinct from the Tamils of India, and indeed call themselves 'Ceylon Tamils' - that is to say, except for one million workers, mainly on tea and rubber estates, whose forbears were brought over from the mainland by the British

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1. Gordon East: The Changing World. pp.516-517.
2. Narasimhan, V.K. and others: The Languages of India. 1958. pp.67-71. There is evidence that in very early times the average people in Ceylon could not understand Sanskrit. The Ramayan records that Hanumant, in order to avoid the servants of Ravana held conversations with Sita in Sanskrit. See Sunder Kand. Chapter XXX, 15.

to provide a labour force for the plantations, for reasons which will be explained in detail in the last Chapter. These are generally known as 'Indian Tamils', and until recently few of them had permanent roots in the Island. Most of them have always cherished the idea of returning some day to their native land and settling down there in their old age - though some of them were born in Ceylon and have never been to India; indeed, on some estates there are Indian labourers of the third and even fourth generations in Ceylon. They number about the same as the Ceylon Tamils, but they cannot be considered as really Ceylonese, even those families who have been for several generations in the Island. A comparatively small number of them have been registered as citizens of Ceylon. The Sinhalese are very much against these Indian Tamils being considered as Ceylonese. Their attitude in this matter cannot, for a variety of reasons, be altogether surprising. The Indian Tamils have never mixed nor wished to mix, to any extent, with the Sinhalese of the Central and Uva provinces, where most of them are to be found working on tea and rubber estates[1]. They have regular employment, and are reasonably well paid and housed in comparison with the Sinhalese villagers who are their neighbours. There is, indeed, at the time of writing, an attempt on the part of the Government of Ceylon to get as many of them as possible sent out of Ceylon and back to India. It may be mentioned

1. The Tamils have also been encouraged in their desire for cultural and political autonomy by the successful agitation for linguistic states in India. See Gansburg. op. cit. p.666.

in passing that if this attempt were to meet with immediate success, it might well mean a temporary, and perhaps a permanent collapse of the tea industry, and, therefore, of the economy of the Island. Further reference will be made to these Indian Tamils when the plantation economy comes to be considered. There were. till recently, many Indian Tamils in towns, particularly in Colombo, working as domestic servants (most European families had four or five), rickshaw pullers, dock workers and unskilled or semi-skilled labourers on the roads and railways and in other public services. These avenues of work are no longer open to them, and most of them have returned to India, except those in certain occupations like latrine workers, and sweepers, which the Sinhalese mostly do not care to undertake.

So far as the Ceylon and Indian Moors are concerned, both these communities are descendants of the Arabs who have left their mark all over Malaysia. As in the case of the Tamils, the 'Indian' Moors are simply later arrivals who are not permanent inhabitants of the Island, but came over from the Malabar coast for trade. The 'Ceylon' Moors, on the other hand, like Arab communities in Singapore and Java, are on the whole, above the average and have contributed in many ways to the life of the country. The fact that the Ceylonese are not themselves seafarers was originally an additional reason for the attraction of a strong Arab community; but many of them now are settled on the Island. The Burghers have played an

important role in Ceylon's history. They are the descendants of the Dutch settlers, and almost all Burgher families now have a proportion of Sinhalese or Tamil blood. On the whole, they maintain the Western rather than the Eastern mode of life, but they completely accepted Ceylon as their native country[1]. They were mostly occupied in trade or Government service, and helped to swell the numbers of the urban middle class. The other Europeans in Ceylon cannot really be counted as part of the permanent population at all, since they, rarely if ever, come to regard it as their home. They are the planters, businessmen and officials who spend their working lives in Ceylon, but do not bring up their families there, and usually retire to their native lands when they give up work.

This diverse population is occupied in two different economies which run separately, side by side, but almost out of contact with each other. The life of the Sinhalese and the Jaffna Tamils is based on a typical Eastern subsistence economy; that of the Europeans and Indian Tamils on a Western plantation economy. We do not find Sinhalese working as labourers in the Western economy nor Indian Tamils settling down in the villages and small towns. There are, however, one or two important points of

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1. This is now changing. Mr. Staples, Superintendent of Oliphant Estate, Nuwara Eliya which I had the privilege to visit, told me that Burghers are now leaving Ceylon. The reason given is the Sinhala language policy of the Government of Ceylon. There is also the fear that Buddhism may be declared as State religion in Ceylon and that that will be discriminatory to the Burghers who are Christians.

contract. Ceylon, in spite of its fertility, is not self-supporting either in rice or fish, and these imports are paid for by the export of cash crops produced by the plantation economy. This is clear now that the plantations are being rapidly bought up by Sinhalese, so that the old accusation that their wealth was drained from the country can no longer be made[1]. That part of the community which practises the subsistence economy cannot, therefore, be considered separately, since it would not be able to subsist on its unaided efforts.

§ 9

RACIAL AFFINITIES.

From the racial point of view, the most outstanding fact which lies at the back in Indo-Ceylon relations is that the population of Ceylon - both Sinhalese as well as Tamils - descend from the early Aryan and Dravidian races. The Ceylon Tamils have been in the Island for a very long time. Indeed, some Tamil controversialists claim that they preceded the Sinhalese, and have even described themselves as the aborigines of Ceylon - probably a quite incorrect assumption. However, there is ample historical evidence that, well before the beginning of the Christian era, invasions from south India had begun, and that these continued sporadically all through the history of Ceylon

1. To this we refer in Chapter 5. It must be remembered that between 1900-1947, the period we survey in this work, 90 per cent of the estates were owned by the Europeans.

up to the coming of the Portuguese early in the 16th century. The Sinhalese epic chronicle, the Mahavamsa, of which more later, tells the story of one of their great national hero-kings, Dutungemunu, in the second century B.C, driving back invaders from the Chola Kingdom in south India, and slaying their king. There were frequent invasions from the South Indian kingdoms of Pandya and Chola, especially after the 9th century of the Christian era. Not much is known of these kingdoms, but they were all Dravidians; that is to say, they spoke languages of which the modern derivatives are the Tamil, Telgu, Canarese and Malayali tongues, and their religious and social customs may be generally described as Hindu. It is difficult to estimate the extent of South Indian influence on the history of Ceylon, particularly the extent to which there was any mixture of races. Some students of philology have laid great stress on the influence which the Tamil language has had on Sinhalese; others have strenuously controverted their claims[1]. But it is clear that at the highest social levels there was considerable interaction during the first millennium of Ceylon's known history. After the 10th century many Sinhalese kings took wives from the neighbouring royal families of South India, and the very last dynasty, extinguished by the British in the early part of the last century, was purely Indian, though bearing Sinhalese names and titles. It is more than possible that some tribes

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1. V.K.Narasimhan and others. op. cit. pp.72-78.

or groups who invaded Ceylon from South India and settled in the north and west of the Island became 'Sinhalised'; it has been stated that the forbears of the Karwa (fisher) and Salagama (cinnamon peeler) castes, which are usually ranked next to the numerous Goigama, or cultivators, originally came from South India and became Sinhalese.

The Tamils, naturally, settled most in the north of the Island, but also spread some way down the north-east and north-west coasts. Here, sometime during the 9th century, they founded an independent kingdom with its head-quarters in the northern peninsula of Jaffna, until its independence was extinguished by the Portuguese in 1615. The Tamils remain the majority in the present Northern and Eastern Provinces, a fact which poses a political problem of first-rate importance[1]. The Jaffna peninsula is dry and to the eye looks barren. But the Jaffna Tamils, perhaps from the incentive provided by difficulty of cultivation have, for centuries, worked very hard indeed to wring a living from its soil. They are industrious, thrifty, and calculating, which helps to account for their success in many walks of life, particularly during the period of British occupation, during which time they spread, though in some districts thinly, nearly all over the Island, and were especially to be found in the service of the

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1. The Federal Party of Ceylon (Pro-Tamil) wants Ceylon to become a Federation so that the Northern and Eastern Provinces may become, autonomous states within the framework of Ceylon's Constitution. See International Bulletin on the Tamil Language Rights. Colombo. pp.14-18.

Government. Up to the coming of the Portuguese, the Tamil Kingdom of Jaffna was often at war with the Sinhalese kings. It would seem that this has left a tradition of hostility between the two races. Throughout the British occupation it looked as if this might be dying down. The Tamils remained a distinct community, but they lived in peaceful co-existence with the Sinhalese, though there was little inter-marriage between members of the two communities, even when they were not sundered by differences of religion as, for example, between the Christians of both races.

§ 10

CONCLUSIONS.

In conclusion we may say that, on the one hand, there are forces and trends which pull India and Ceylon closer together-geographical propinquity, racial affinity, religious background, linguistic relations and economic links. On the other hand, there are fears and apprehensions among some people in Ceylon that their smallish Island of about 25,000 sq. miles (270 miles from south to north at its lowest, and 140 miles at its widest from east to west) may be taken over at any time by a government of India which may be dominated by South Indians. These forces and apprehensions have been accentuated by the segregation of Ceylon from the main currents of Indian history, deliberately effected to advance colonial interests. The interesting fact which will clearly emerge in the course of the next chapter is that a constitutional advance in India stimulated

a more or less similar advance in Ceylon also. It will also be noticed that any cultural renaissance on the mainland also sent its ripples across the Palk Strait. Racially, the Sinhalese as well as the Tamils are the descendants of migrants from India. The Tamil language spoken in Ceylon by 30 per cent of its population does not differ in any detail from the Tamil spoken in Madras; the Sinhala is a mixture of Sanskrit, Pali, Tamil and Prakrit. Buddhism and Hinduism are the two most dominent religions practised in Ceylon. There are, of course, Roman Catholicism and Islam but the number of their followers is a tiny fraction of the total population. It would thus appear that the demographic factor tends to establish permanent ties between India and Ceylon. At the same time it must be stressed that the dual economy of peasant and plantation, and the plural society of Sinhalese peasantary, Tamils old and new, and a large number of Moors and Eurasians, professing four creeds create complex socio-political problems. The threat of a culturally aggressive India is very real to many Ceylonese. As a small country the Island's power position or potential is not great.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORICAL FACTOR IN INDO-CEYLON RELATIONS

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THE SURAS (GODS) AND THE ASURAS (DEMONS)

The Island of Ceylon was known to Brahmanical literature under the name of Lanka[1]; to the Greeks and Romans as Taprobane; to the Mohammedans seamen and merchants, who for so long had a monopoly of the sea-borne trade of the Indian ocean, as Serendib, which term has been suggested as a corruption of the Sanskrit Sinhala-dvipa; and to the Portuguese as Zeylan, from which is derived its modern name. In Pali the name of the Island was Tambapanni[2]. This properly was the name of a district on the north-west coast, in ancient times the portion of the country best known to seafaring traders; as in the case of India and of Asia itself the name of the part has been transferred to the whole. In the Periplus its older name is given as Taprobane and its modern as "Palaisimundu". After the Sinhalese settlement it was styled in Sanskrit Sinhala-dvipa, and in Pali Sinhala-dipa, a name which in process of time passed into Arabic as Serendib, or was known simply as Sinhala or Sihala[3]. This in the form "Sinhale" still survives in

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1. Lanka was the name both of the Capital and the land in the days of Ravana. Vijayatunga. op.cit.p.126.
2. Tambo+Panni = Copper+hand. The name was perhaps given by Vijaya when he waded ashore and clutched the sand and saw that his palms were copper-coloured. He gave the name Tambapanni to the place and the whole Island later acquired the name.
3. The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, quoted by Kennedy in J.R.A.S. 1918. p.112.

common parlance as the name of the Kandyan districts, which were the last to lose independence, and is the origin of 'Ceylon', through the medium of Arabic and Portuguese. Shortly after, we will explain briefly how this term "Sinhale", stuck to the Island, which had the reputation of producing pearls, transparent stones, muslins and tortoise shells.

The creation of Lanka is graphically described in the Ramayana; when Varuna (the God of Rain) and Vasuki (the King of Snakes) exhibited their comparative strength in a contest, the rage of Varuna was such that three of the thousand peaks of Mount Meru toppled into the sea. On the middle of these three peaks (Trikuta) Visvakarma, the heavenly architect, built Lanka for the three powerful brothers of the Rakshasa race, Malyavat, Sumali and Mali[1]. As the Ramayana describes it:

> " The Rakshasas, assembled together, joyfully said unto Visvakarma, prince of artists: 'Thou by thy own energy art the architect of the great Gods, endowed with energy and prowess and strength. Do thou, O magnanimous one, construct a fabric for us after our heart near Himavan, or Meru, or Mandara. And do thou erect a magnificent mansion for us resembling the mansion itself of Mahesvara'. Thereat Visvakarma - the mighty arm of the Rakshasas - spoke of a building like the Amaravati of Sakra, on the shore of the Southern Sea on a mountain named Trikuta... On the midmost peak resembling clouds, inaccessible even to the fowls of the air... if I am desired by you. I can construct the city of Lanka having an area of thirty Yojanas (2) and measuring an hundred in

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1. Sunder Kand : Chapter II, 10th Verse.
(2) Yojana= a measure of length varying from eight to sixteen miles.

> length, surrounded with a golden wall and furnished with golden gateways. In her do ye dwell ye foremost of Rakshasas. And, occupying the citadel of Lanka, backed by innumerable Rakshasas, ye will be invincible to foes and capable of destroying them'. Hearing Visvakarma's speech, those foremost of Rakshasas, accompanied by thousands of followers, went to the palace and set up in the same, having a strong wall and a moat, abounding in hundreds of golden edifices. And obtaining Lanka, the night-rangers, exceedingly delighted, began to dwell therein".[1]

With this beginning we see the stage set for a mighty contest between Suras and Asuras, of God and Lucifer. To begin with Malyavat, Sumali and Mali are depicted as having practised austerities and having been blessed by Brahma as a result of their austerities. Having won boons from Brahma, they became proud and schemed to be rivals of the Gods. The later story of Ravana is the natural sequel.

§ 2

NAMES OF THE ISLAND.

Lanka had other names also. At the time of Buddha Kakusanda[2], the first Buddha of the present Kalpa

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1. Ibid. Chapter III. 20th Verse. Also see Uttarkand. 24,25.
2. Kakusanda = Krakuchanda. According to Buddhist teachings each world-cycle (Kalpa) has had a Buddha who preached in each Kalpa the Way of Righteousness. The Buddha Gautama was the 30th in that line. While some of those names are quite legendry, the names of those Buddhas who had lived in Kalpas preceding the present were more familiar in India at the time of the Buddha Gautam. According to Vincent Smith: "The fact that Asoka twice repaired the stupa of Kanakamuni, one of the previous Buddhas, proves that reverence for those saints was not incompatible with devotion to the teaching of the previous Buddhas". op. cit. p.72. Three of them seem to have been real persons - Krakuchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kasyapa. Walpula Rahula. op. cit. Chapter I.

(who lived about 107,570,558 B.C.) it was known as Ojadipa (Sanskrit : Urjadvipa). In the time of the Buddha Konagama, the second Buddha of the present Kalpa (referred to earlier as Kanakamuni) who lived about 73,016,558 B.C. this land was known as Varadipa, the most glorious and precious island. When the Buddha Kasyana lived on this earth, that is about 3,854,558 B.C. it was known as Mandadipa, a name which means'chief of islands', also 'ornament-like island'. Ratnadvipa, the Island of Gems is a later name. Nagadvipa which may not be translated as the Island of Snakes but the Island of the Nagas, worshippers of serpents, was probably the same as Ophir, from the Greek Ophis, a snake. Nagadvipa might have been the name for the whole Island or was the name of a particular portion or the metropolis. Kalaniya, not the present Kelaniya evidently, but that which was swallowed by the sea, was probably an important seat of Naga worship. TheSinghala history Rajavaliya[1] refers to the flood that submerged the ancient Kelaniya thus :

> " At this time, i.e., about 200 B.C., on account of the wickedness of Kelanitissa 100,000 sea-board towns, 970 vishers' villages, and 470 villages of pearl-fisheries making altogether eleven-twelfths of Lanka, were submerged by the great sea. Mannar escaped destruction; and of sea-board towns Katupiti-Madampe escaped".

In the same book we find this reference as well :

> " In the Dvapara Yuga of the world, on account of

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1. Rajavaliya, a Singhala history detailing chronicles of Lanka from prehistoric times upto the end of the 17th century. Written probably in the 18th century. Translated by Gunasekara in 1900. p.147.

the wickedness of Ravana, his fortress, 25 palaces and 400,000 streets, situated between Mannar and Tuttukudiya were submerged by the sea" (1).

ere is another suggestion that there was one land mass ween Mannar and Tuticorin.

The earliest map of Ceylon which we have, is that Ptolemy in the first century after Christ. In this the t coast with the mouth of the Ganges (Mahaweliganga) is inly recognizable; but the 'North Point' is ~~pixxxk~~ modern Talaimannar, not far from which is the trading-m of Talakory, corresponding with the later Mahatittha Mantota. The Hill Country or Malaya is shown under s name, and the two chief cities were the 'Royal City', rogrammon or Anuradhapura, and the 'Metropolis', grammon (Sanskrit, Mahagrama) on the Mahaweliganga; s last has been identified with Mahiyangana, the modern tnuwara, but may have been lower down stream and not from Magam-tota by Polonnaruwa. The termination ammon', 'village', instead of 'pura', 'city', is of erest. "Before Ptolemy's time the west coast of Ceylon supposed to extend almost as far as Africa. An lanation of this may be found in the fact that the east st of that continent in the neighbourhood of Zanzibar was wn to the Greeks as Azania, and that a river on the west st of Ceylon according to Ptolemy was the Azanos" [2].

Megasthenaes, the Greek ambassador to the court Chandragupta (B.C. 321-297), knew of Ceylon but vaguely;

he calls its people Palaeogoni. Pliny records that in the reign of Claudius (A.D.41-54), a freedman of Annius Plocamus, who had rented the customs of the Red Sea, while sailing round Arabia was caught by the north winds and driven past the coast of Carmania (Mekran) to Ceylon, where he landed on the fifteenth day at the port of Hippuros, presumably on the south-west coast of the Island. He was taken to the King, who entertained him for six months, and afterwards sent an embassy to Rome. The port is said to have faced the south, and to have been close to the chief city Palaesimundus on the river of the same name, which had three mouths. This stream as well as another, the Cydara, which ran northwards towards India, were reported to flow out of a vast lake, Megisha, in the interior. The nearest point of India was the Coliac headland, Ptolemy's Cory, or Ramesvaram, four days' sail away. The Periplus apparently derives its name for the Island, Palaesimundu, from this account[1].

§ 3

CEYLON IN THE RAMAYANA

The legendary history of Ceylon begins with the Ramayana, the epic poem which recounts the ravishing of Sita by the demon king of Lanka, Ravana, and her recovery by her husband Rama with the aid of the monkey chief Hanumanta. But, though a few names in the Island refer to

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1. Vijayatunga: op. cit. p.161.

the legend, such as Nuwara Eliya, 'the glade of (Ravana's) city', Sita Eliya, 'Sita's glade', and Sitewaka, the epic itself seems to have found but a small place in the folk-lore of the Sinhalese[1]. It is, however, important that we give here a brief description of Ceylon as it was in the image of Indians at that time.

We have already referred to the mighty contest between the Suras and Asuras; in due course, according to the Ramayana, the Rakshasas are expelled from Lanka which was occupied by the Yakshas under Vaisravana, son of Visrava and grandson of Pulastya, who was himself a son of Brahma. This is how Lanka is being described to Vaisravana :

> " On the shore of the Southern Sea there is a mount named Trikuta. On its brow is a beautiful and broad city built by Visvakarma, named Lanka, resembling the city itself of Indra the great, designed for the abode of Rakshasas-like unto the Amravati of Indra. There in Lanka, do thou, reside. It is surrounded with a golden wall and a moat, and is furnished with engines and weapons, and has gateways of gold and lapislazuli. In a former time she was renounced by the Rakshasas, afflicted with the fear of Vishnu; and was empty of swarms of Rakshasas who had gone to the nethermost regions. Now Lanka is vacant - no one lords over her. Do thou, my child, for abode, at thine ease repair thither. Thy stay there shall meet with no rub, and no manner of disturbance shall occur there. Hearing the righteous speech of his sire, that virtuous-souled one along with thousands of delighted and joyous Yakshas began to reside in Lanka... In a short time Lanka, through his sway,

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1. I saw the Sita Eliya, which in Ramayana is Ashoka Vatika. It is about 15 miles from Nuwara Eliya. There is a small temple which attracts tourists.

> abounded in wealth. And that foremost of Nairitas, the righteous son of Visrava, well pleased, abode in Lanka having the ocean for her entrenchment. At times the righteous-souled Lord of Riches (1), mounted on Pushpaka (2), in humble guise, visited his father and mother. And hymned by hosts of deities and Gandharvas, having his mansion graced with the dancing of Apsaras, and floating on rays like the sun himself, that Ruler of Riches went to his sire."

Visrava had other sons. By his wife, Kesini, daughter of Sumali, he had three sons, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishan. Their sister was Suparnakhi. These three brothers too practised "tapasya"[3] and by the merit of their "tapas"[4] received certain boons from Brahma which made them powerful and invincible. Having obtained those boons they began to covet Lanka, ruled by their half-brother Vaisravana. The Rakshasas owed allegiance to Ravana. Ravana, therefore, reminded Vaisravana that Lanka should really belong to the Rakshasas, and further, on the advice of Visrava, Vaisravana with 'his wives and sons, with his counsellors and his vehicles and wealth' went to Mount Kailas near the holy

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(1) Vaisaravana is also known by the name of Kuvera or Kubera, God of Riches. 'The biographer of Hiuen Tsang tells a curious story about the treasure deposited by the hostage as an endowment for the Tha-lo-ka shrine at Kapisa (the modern Kafirstan beyond Kabul), which was known to be under the feet of the image of Vaisravana, otherwise known as Kuvera, or Jambhala, the great spirit king, at the south side of the eastern gate of the Hall of Buddha'. V.A.Smith. Ibid.p.279.

(2) Pushpaka = a celestial vehicle presented by Brahma to Vaisravana for travel across space. Ramayana. Chapter II, 20th verse. Also refer to the description of Pushpaka in Sunder Kand, Chapter VIII, 1.

3. Penance.

4. Long-term penance.

Lake Mansarovar. Ravana and his brothers and their forces entered Lanka and thus began Ravana's rule of Lanka. The Ramayana thus describes Lanka under Ravana :

> " Lanka, ruled by Ravana, was situated on the top of Trikuta, ten yojanas in width and twenty in length. And that city was guarded with lofty, ornamented gateways resembling pale clouds, and golden and silver walls; and Lanka was adorned with palaces and piles, like the sky graced with clouds on the approach of the raily season. And that palace which was adorned with thousands of pillars, and which, as if piercing the heavens, looked like a peak of Kailas - was the residence of the sovereign of the Rakshasas - the ornament of the city, ever guarded by hundreds of Rakshasas"(1).

As Ravana's reign is said to have been from 1,081,387 to 2387 B.C. it probably means that there was a dynasty and that one Rakshasa King after another took the name, 'Ravana'. After Rama killed Ravana he made Vibhishana, King of Ceylon. There was a Vibhisana when the Buddha Gautama visited Lanka in 588 B.C. 'to expel the Rakshasas' which may be interpreted as meaning 'to convert the Rakshasas'. When Meghavahana, King of Kashmir visited Lanka, there was a Vibhishana on the throne of Lanka[2]. Vibhishana, like the name Ravana, has been adopted by more than one king evidently.

At the time of Rama's invasion the Kalu Ganga of today was evidently a much larger watercourse and was a boundary between the north and south of Ceylon. Rama gave the land north of the Kalu Ganga to Vibhishana and that

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(1) Sunder Kand. Chapter VIII.
2. According to Rajatarangini prince Meghavahana "led an expedition to compel other kings to desist from killing animals. When he reached the hill of Rohana in Ceylon, his army rested under the shadows of palm

south to Kadiravelu, who was one of his generals, probably a South Indian ally [1]. Vibhishana ruled over Yakshas who were 'enemies of the gods' and, therefore, Kalutara. That part of Kalutara came to be known as Desestra from Devasatru (enemies of the Devas), and the southern portion came to be called Velapura Kalutara. There is to this day a Kalutara North and a Kalutara South. There is a Vibhishana Devale at Kelaniya and we have already mentioned the Katarangama Devale where the Vel of Kartikeya is said to be reposing. The Dipavamsa [2] says :

> " This country of Lanka is a residence inhabited by men since remote Kalpas. May many men

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trees. Vibhishana, the king of the country, met him on friendly terms with songs and loud chantings. Then the king of Langka led the king of Kashmira to Langka, and entertained him. He forbade the use of flesh among his subjects who, by and large, as Rakshashas, consumed it. Vibhishana then gave the king of Kashmira several flags in which the Rakshashas were represented in a bowing posture. Even to this day on every occasion that a king of Kashmira goes out, these flags, which are called Paradhvajas, are borne before him. Thus he forbade the use of animal food even in the kingdom of the Rakshashas and then returned to his town. From that time none violated the king's order against the destruction of animals, neither in water, nor in the skies, nor in forests". Kalhana's Rajatarangini, a Chronicle of the Kings of Kasmir, translated with an Introductory Commentary and Appendices, by M.A. Stein (2 Vols., Constable, 1900).

1. Codrington, H.W.: A Short History of Ceylon. Chapter I.
2. Vincent Smith has this to say about Dipavamsa:
"The earliest of the Ceylonese chronicles, the Dipavamsa, which probably was compiled late in the fourth century after Christ, is some six centrues posterior to the death of Asoka, and has little claim to be regarded as a first-rate authority, although deserving respectful consideration...The North Indian legends are at least as old; but being recorded in fragments scattered through many books, Indian, Nepalese, Chinese, and Tibetan, have received scant attention. All legendary material, of course, must be used with extreme caution, and only as a supplement to authentic data; but a moment's thought will show that legends

dwell in the country of Lanka, as they did in former times in the Oja, Vara and Manda Islands. Adorned with these and other good qualities, it will shine among the islands when the Dhamma shall have been brought there, like the full moon in the sky at the time of the Uposatha".

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preserved in northern India, the seat of Asoka's imperial power, are more likely to transmit genuine tradition than those which reached the distant island of Ceylon in translations brought nobody knows, how, when, or whence, and subsequently largely modified by local and sectarian influences. This presumption is verified when the two groups of legends are compared; and then it clearly appears that in certain matters of importance where they differ, the northern version is distinctly the more credible". (V.A.Smith: The Early History of India. p.180).

Mr. Smith appears to be unduly prejudiced against the Ceylonese chronicles, the Mahavamsa and the Dipavamsa. Or perhaps he is allergic to 'Geiger' the translator. However, there is one instance in this book, when he is compelled, reluctantly, to accept the Singhala version. Discussing the date of the death of Buddha he writes: 'I do not believe that the date can be fixed with anything like certainty, and in opposition to the arguments in favour of 487 or 486 B.C. we now have the new reading of the Kharavela inscription which, if correct, obliges us to move back all the Saisunga dates more than fifty years and therefore, supports the Ceylon date for the death of Buddha, viz. 544 or 543 B.C. It may be argued that traditions preserved in Magadha should be more trustworthy than those recorded at a later date by monks in distant Ceylon, but there is ample evidence of the fact that Gautama Buddha was contemporary with both Bimbisara or Srenika and his son Ajatasatru or Kunika, and this being so, I am compelled, until further light is thrown on the subject, to accept tentatively the earlier date, 545 B.C. based on the chronology disclosed by the Kharavela inscription....(Ibid. p.50).

It may be pointed out that Ceylon's communications with the kingdoms of Magadha, Vanga and Kalinga were until about the 13th century continuous, and that during that period Ceylon enjoyed greater security than those kingdoms did. Consequently there was a better atmosphere in Ceylon for the writing down of history and there was a better chance for the safe keeping of records in the latter country. Though

The terms, Rakshasas and Yakshas, which seem to have been interchangeable, are explained in the Ramayana thus :

> " The lord of creatures sprung from water, first created water. And the lotus-born one (Brahma) generated creatures for protecting that element. And thereupon those creatures humbly presented themselves before the creator, saying, 'what shall we do, we are sore tired by hunger and thirst'. The Lord of creatures laughing addressed them, saying, 'ye men, do ye carefully guard this (water'. Thereat some said 'Rakshama', that is, 'we shall protect', and others 'Yakshama', that is, 'we shall worship'. Thus accosted by those afflicted with hunger and thirst, the creator said, 'those among you who have said Rakshama shall be Rakshamas, and those among you, who have said Yakshama shall be Yakshas'. Among these Rakshasas there were two brothers, named Heti and Praheti, of whom Praheti, who was righteous, went to the wood of asceticism and Heti married Bhaya and begot a son named Vidyutkesa. Vidyutkesa who married Sala Katankata, had a son named Sukesa, who, having been foresaken by them in course of their wanderings, was picked up and adopted by Parvati, wife of Siva, who made him attain the age of his mother, conferred on him immortality and granted him the power of ranging the air, while Parvati herself granted the following boon to the Rakshasas: 'Henceforth the Rakshasis shall conceive in a day, bring forth the child in a day, and the child shall in a day be furnished with the age of its mother'. This highly favoured Sukesa married Devavati, daughter of Gramani (a Gandharva chief) and begot Malyavat, Sumali and Mali. At the time when the Rakshasas were living out of Lanka, Sumali in order to bring them back to Lanka, gave his daughter Kaikasi in marriage to Visrava, son of Pulastya. On this union were born Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Vibhishana, Suparnakhi, while by his other wife Idavida, Visrava had Kuvera. Kuvera was the last Yaksha king of Ceylon, and Vibhishana the last Rakshasa king"(1).

<u>odium theologicum</u> is experienced now and then in the

(1) Valmiki Ramayana: Uttar Kand. Chapter III.

P.T.O.

With such mythical happenings it is not to be wondered that tradition came to associate with Yakashas and Rakshasas all sorts of inhuman peculiarities. These beings were described as being of all shapes and sizes, able to take on various disguises, animal, bird, reptile. Unlike human beings, they did not wink their eyes. Ravana was supposed to have had ten heads, ten pairs of eyes, ten pairs of hands, and 320 teeth.[1] (If he had, Sita would have died of shock the moment she saw him). Kuveni, the tribal princess of the Yakshas, whom Vijaya, the founder of the Singhala race married, is described as having three heads, three eyes, and three breasts. The incompatibility of a prince of Yanga, who had sown his own land, marrying such a monster did not strike the chroniclers. The _Kathasaritsagara_ further describes them thus :

> " They have no power in the day being dazed with the brightness of the sun; therefore, they delight in the night. And when the gods are not worshipped, and the Brahmans, in due form, and when men eat contrary to the holy law, then also they have power. Where there is a man who abstains from flesh, or a virtuous woman, there they do not go. They never attack chaste men, heroes, and men awake' (2).

This just boils down to a more ingenious version of the bogeyman. However, as far as the night habits were

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Dipavamsa and the Mahavamsa, neither of these chronicles is less faithful a record of the times described than any similar history of documentation. The fanciful and the legendary in them is by no means excessive when compared with similar recorded history.

1. Valmiki: Uttar Kand. Chapter IV and V.
2. Kathasarita Sagara. p.210 (Hindi translation). The passage above quoted is the English rendering.

concerned, they could not have applied to Kuveni's tribe of Yakshas, who went about their normal work, spun and toiled (though not much), and whose chieftains had the job of governing and keeping their men in training. Vijaya did not have such an easy job of vanquishing them; it was only through Kuveni's aid that at last he defeated the Yaksha hosts. According to the Mahavamsa:

> " The King (Vijaya) having put Kalasena, the chief of the Yakshas, to death, assumed his court dress. The rest of his retinue dressed themselves in the vestments of the other Yakshas" (1).

If this be correct, then this picture of the Yakshas with their high state of civilisation is quite at variance with the descriptions of them as abnormal beings. Rama, with all the resources of civilisation, and with the help of so many allies, had to use every device to lay waste Lanka, Ravana's capital and finally to slay Ravana. When finally Ravana fell [2], he was cremated by orders of Rama according to Vedic rites, a further proof that the term Rakshasa had in later days come to be a term of opprobrium, and had lost all the earlier significance of divine origin.

§ 4

THE VISITS OF THE BUDDHA

But to the Sinhalese, of much greater interest were the visits of Buddha to Ceylon. Of these, the first was the visit to Mahiyangana, when after expelling the

1. Chapter 6.
2. Valmiki : Yuddha Kanda. Chapter LXXV.

Yakkhas or demon inhabitants of the country, he gave to Samon a lock of his hair, which that god enshrined in a sapphire casket. The second visit was to Nagadipa (the Jaffna Peninsula), when Buddha settled a dispute between the Naga princes, Mahodara and Chulodara, concerning a gem-set throne. The third visit was to Kelaniya, where Buddha stayed at the site of the later dagoba; thence he went to Samantakuta or Adam's Peak, on which he set the imprint of his foot, to Dighavapi in the present Eastern Province, and to Anuradhapura, where he sanctified by his presence various sites, including those of the Bo-tree and of the Ruwanweli Dagoba[1]. Anuradhapura itself according to the legend had also been hallowed by the visits of the three previous Buddhas of the present age, in whose times it was called Abhayapura, Vadhamana, and Visalanagara. There is no historical foundation for the visits of Gautama Buddha or of his three predecessors. The legendary inhabitants of the country were the Yakkhas, the Nagas and the Devas, and under these names possibly a kernel of fact may be concealed[2].

§ 5

THE LEGEND OF VIJAYA

The traditional first king of Ceylon is Vijaya. His grandmother, Suppadevi, according to the legend was the daughter of the king of Venga (Bengal) by a princess

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1. Dagoba. A relic shrine, a solid hemispherical monument surmounted by a spire.
2. These visits are graphically described by Vijayatunga in his monograph: The Isle of Lanka: Ceylon. Chapter II.

of Kalinga (Orissa). She ran away from home and in the country of Lala or Lada, the modern Gujarat, mated with a lion (sinha); whence the names of her children and ultimately that of Sinhala, the designation of Ceylon and of the Sinhalese. At the age of sixteen her son Sinhabahu carried off his mother and his twin sister to the haunts of men; the lion in his search for his family ravaged the country, and for the sake of the reward offered by the king of Vanga was slain by his own son. The king dying at the time, Sinhabahu was elected as his successor, but abandoned Vanga and built the city of Sinhapura in his native country, Lada[1]. His son, Prince Vijaya, and his boon companions committed such outrages in his father's capital that the king was compelled by popular clamour to drive them forth. They set sail and, touching at Supparaka, a famous port on the west coast of India (Sopara, north of Bombay), ultimately arrived at Tambapanni. Here they found the country inhabited by Yakkhas or demons, and one of Kuveni, entrapped Vijaya's followers, but was compelled by the prince to release them. She then became Vijaya's mistress, and assisted him to exterminate her fellow-demons, whose chief seats are given as Sirivatthu and Lankapura. These were identified later with the hills, Loggala and Laggala, though it is clear from the narrative that Sirvatthu was quite close to Vijaya's landing place, as he heard the noise of the wedding festivities, of which he

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1. This is the version accepted by Codrington, H.W. Also refer to Periplus (Ed). W.H.Schoff, 1912.

took advantage to attack the Yakkhas. Vijaya now settled at Tambapanni, a port on the south of the river, perhaps the Malwatu Oya, and his followers formed various villages in the neighbouring country; these were Anuradhapura on the banks of the Malwatu Oya; Upatissa, seven or eight miles further north; Uruvela, a seaport to the west of Anuradhapura, perhaps at Marichchikatti; Ujjeni and Vijita. His followers now requested Vijaya to assume the crown, and despatched an embassy in search of a queen to the Pandyan king at Madura. The princess and her retinue landed at Mahatittha (Mantota); she espoused Vijaya and her women his companions, while the discarded Kuveni with her two children wandered to Lankapura, and was slain by her enraged kinsfolk. The children fled to Adam's Peak and became the ancestors of the Pulindas (hill-men or Veddas)[1]. Such is the received story in Ceylon. It is thus obvious that they must have royal blood however much diluted in the course of the years. It is also clear that the story of Vijaya provides a historical link between India and Ceylon.

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THE VEDDAS - ANOTHER LINK

The Veddas were, therefore, aboriginal inhabitants of the Island; a few of them still occupy certain rock shelters in the Eastern Province of the Island. A careful

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1. Literally it means "archers" or hunters with bow and arrows.

and scientific examination of these people was made in 1910 by Seligman. Their language is said to have certain Indian affinities [1]. But they seem ethnologically to be related to the rather lightly coloured, wavy-haired race that is found surviving in many parts of South-Eastern India. The Veddas are probably related to the Semang or Pengan of the Malaya Peninsula and to the Andaman islanders. Of the latter race, however, no trace has ever been found in Ceylon. The Veddas are regarded by theSinhalese as of Goigama-husbandmen caste. We will discuss the caste system of Ceylon and its close affinity with the Indian caste system in the next chapter. It must be remembered that wherever the Veddas are found in Ceylon, they were till recently in the hunting stage of human existence. A great number of them have now been Sinhalised, probably as a result of intermixing of blood. It would be safe to say that the Veddas were stone-age people, rather like some of the forest tribes of South India, the Bhils and the Gonds to whom it would appear that the Veddas are akin. These primitive peoples undoubtedly practised some form of animistic religion, and some of its cults may survive, underlying the forms of Hinduism which the Sinhalese brought with them, and the Buddhism which they later adopted [2]. Buddhism was, and is, a most tolerant religion and, like several of the other great

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1. Narasimhan and others. op. cit. pp. 73-74.
2. Percival, Capt. Robert: An Account of the island of Ceylon. Chapter 2. Also refer to Seligman C.G. de Brenda Z: The Veddas. 1911. Chapter 3.

world religions, made comparatively little attempt to upset or do away with many of the superstitions practices which are found among the peoples whose leaders adopted one or the other of these religions. Which non-Buddhist practices among the Sinhalese village folk descend from those that they brought with them, and which they absorbed from the peoples who inhabited Ceylon before they arrived, is a question which is beyond the scope of this thesis. But there is evidence to suggest that non-vegetarianism which today is practised by about 80 per cent of the people of Ceylon, has nothing to do with the Buddhist religion[1].

§ 7

THE INDIAN ORIGIN OF SINHALESE AND THE COMING OF BUDDHISM

So far as the Sinhalese are concerned the consensus of opinion among the authorities is that they migrated from Northern India. There are some scholars who insist on a north-eastern origin. Possibly both are right and there may have been more than one stream of immi ration[2]. They came and settled in the Island before the birth of Christ, and in the course of time they became the Island's predominant group. Their descendants claim to be of 'Aryan' stock, which may well be the case. Certainly the Sinhalese language is, in origin, an Aryan dialect, though it would appear to have been greatly influenced and

1. Walpola Rapula. op. cit. Chapters VI-VII.
2. The Cambridge History of India. p.606. The view is here expressed that there were two streams of immigration.

modified by other languages, of Dravidian origin, particularly Tamil. According to legend, the Sinhalese came in one wave, led, as we stated earlier, by a mythical hero named Vijaya. This is the legend given in the *Mahavamsa*, the ancient chronicle of Ceylon[1], which includes Sinhalese as well as other names of a totemistic character, So that it is possible that these tribes may have come to the Island at various times between the fifth and the third centuries B.C. Little is known of their social customs beyond what can be sifted from the chaff of myth and legend, which does not amount to much. The Sinhalese invaders practised agriculture and were acquainted with the use of iron, which would account for their speedy success over the indigenous tribes, who may not have progressed further than the hunting stage, using stone

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1. The *Mahavamsa*, written in Pali, the sacred language of Buddhism, was probably compiled during the sixth century A.C., and was based on an earlier chronicle, and a long tradition of history handed down orally by Buddhist bhikkhus. (monk is the closest English translation of this term). It is a remarkable document, being a continuous history, unique in Asia, upto the middle of the fourth century. It was afterwards continued, in what is known as the *Culavamsa*, by various hands upto the middle of the 18th century. Unlike most oriental countries, Ceylon can thus boast a written history of considerable antiquity. The word 'Mahavamsa' means The Genealogy of the Great, and, as was to be expected, the priestly chroniclers who wrote in Pali, a tongue not understood by the people, had nothing to say about them. They tell also with apparent fidelity the long, tangled story of successive murderous strivings for the throne and of the frequent invasions of Northern and Central Ceylon by princes and armies of Southern India.
   The *Mahavamsa* was translated in English in 1912 by W.Geiger.

weapons and implements. The degree of their civilisation can only be surmised, but from the geographical factors enumerated in the first chapter of this dissertation, the fact that they settled in the northern part of the Island, and hardly penetrated for a long time to the wet zone, would imply some knowledge of artificial irrigation.

The Sinhalese colonists were a progressive people. In a few centuries they brought the Island to a high standard of development, in government and in such arts as architecture and sculpture. Above all, they were interested in agriculture. They built one of the most complex irrigation systems ever attempted. The reservoirs, called tanks, were constructed with such skill that modern engineers cannot improve on them. Some of the tanks cover as much as 5,000 acres or more. One in central Ceylon, the Kalawewa, has an area of 7 square miles and its bund (embankment) is 6 miles long, 50 feet high, and 20 feet broad at the top. From one of the sluices, the Yoda Ela Canal carries water to Anuradhapura, a distance of 54 miles, and supplies more than 100 village tanks along its course. Kalawewa's ancient spill - 200 feet wide and 180 feet high - is still in good condition.

In fact the immigration of the Sinhalese from North India is the first major event in the history of Ceylon. The second was the introduction of the Buddhist religion during the second half of the third century B.C.: the date usually assigned is B.C. 247. At that time the great emperor Asoka ruled over most of India, and was

acknowledged as the supreme ruler by the kings and rulers of the whole sub-continent. The king of the Sinhalese was Tissa, who was sufficiently in touch with the state of India to send the Mauryan emperor an embassy. In return, Asoka recognised Tissa's kingship and sent him a message recommending him to adopt the teachings of the Buddha - the Dhamma. According to the *Mahavamsa*, Asoka sent his son Mahinda, who had taken the vows of a bhikkhu, to preach the religion. The Sinhalese king gladly accepted it, and became known as Devanampiya Tissa, the first word signifying 'beloved of the gods'. By this time the Sinhalese kings had established their head-quarters at Anuradhapura, which was to remain their capital city for nearly a thousand years. Here was founded a '*vihara*' (which may be translated as monastery) and here (brought by Mahinda's sister, a Buddhist bhikkuni or a nun) was planted a branch of the sacred Bo tree (*ficus religiosa*) under which the Buddha was sitting when enlightenment came to him. The tree is still there, and it is said to be the oldest existing tree in the world. This, briefly, is the story of the coming of Buddhism as told in the *Mahavamsa*. The force of historical criticism is being brought to bear on it, to the effect that the introduction and spread of Buddhism were probably of much slower growth; but however modified or even discredited, the essential fact is that the story is implicitly believed by the people of Ceylon. Buddhism became the sole religion, and spread over the country and above the mass of local cults -

the worship of Hindu gods and minor local deities, the propitiation of demons and spirits, and so forth, which remained, and still remain, a substratum beneath it. Within two centuries of the introduction of Buddhism in the Island the new religion spread throughout, and the Sinhalese have been Buddhist ever since; most of the Tamils, however, have remained Hindu. This is one of the most significant historical factors which helps us in understanding the present Indo-Ceylon problems[1].

The Sinhalese kings, whose early capital was Anuradhapura were enthusiastic builders. They erected many Buddhist temples - viharas - and dagobas[2]. In this way the kings believed that they would earn merit for themselves after death. So engrossed were they in this work that they neglected the Island's defences. The result was that the Dravidians in southern India, aware of the weakness of Ceylon, launched an attack in the second century B.C. and occupied part of Ceylon. This was the first of a series of Dravidian invasions which disrupted the peaceful life of the Sinhalese. During certain periods the Dravidians ruled over the whole Island and exacted tribute from the Sinhalese[3]. One of the two greatest Sinhalese kings was Dutugemunu. It was he who drove the Dravidians out of Ceylon, in the second century

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1. This we examine in the next chapter.
2. A dagoba, a domed, pyramid-shaped structure is constructed of sun-dried bricks and enshrines relics of the Buddha.
3. Lands and Peoples. Vol. 4. 1961. p.168.

B.C. after they had held it in thrall for forty-four years. Then followed a great blossoming of art and architecture. Under Dutugemunu, temples, hospitals and other buildings were constructed. Among them was the Brazen Palace, erected in Anuradhapura to accommodate a community of monks. It had nine stories, each divided into hundred apartments richly adorned with silver. The roof was covered with copper tiles. Today, all that remains of the palace is a forest of 1,600 granite columns, which once supported the structure. By the beginning of the Christian era, Greek mariners had discovered that the monsoons could be made to blow their ships over the high seas from the Gulf of Aden to India and Ceylon. From such voyages, Greek traders brought back to Europe spices, muslins, pearls and precious stones. During the eighth century A.D., however, the Arabs took over a large part of the trade in the Indian Ocean. This was about two hundred years after they had become Muslims. Some of them settled in Ceylon and so brought the Islamic faith to the Island. Also, as time went on, some of the Tamils were converted to Islam. The reign of Parakrammabahu the Great in the 12th century is sometimes called the golden age of Lanka. Parakramababu was a man of enormous energy, a builder and a warrior and he restored the irrigation works. "Not a drop of water shall reach the ocean until it has rendered service to man", he said[1]. He rebuilt Polonnaruwa,

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1. Ibid. pp. 168-169.

erecting a palace of seven stories, a theatre, recreation halls, and temples for the Brahmans. As his father's father was a Tamil and a Hindu, he respected the religious feelings of the Tamils. By his orders there was no carving of a bull, sacred to the Tamils, in the ornate threshold stones of his structures. Thus its image would not be trod upon. In war, Parakramababu won many victories over the ruler of Burma and over the kings in southern India.

About a century later Marco Polo saw Ceylon. The celebrated Venetian traveller was on his way home from China, in 1294, when he stopped in the Island. There, as he related, were found the most valuable rubies and the best sapanwood (a red dyewood) in the world. Of the people, he remarked that they were unwarlike. He also mentioned Adam's Peak as a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims and noticed the old iron chains. From the 13th century through the 15th, Ceylon was in a highly unsettled state. There were invasions, from India, Malaya and even from as far away as China. At the same time, the various Ceylonese kingdoms quarreled and fought with each other. The capital of the Sinhalese kingdom was moved several times, until, around 1500, it was at Kotte (near Colombo). Then, in 1505, the Portuguese came to the Island and won permission from the Sinhalese king to erect a factory. Soon they had control of the whole coast. A number of the Sinhalese people, however, were disgusted with the weak

Kotte kings and disliked the Portuguese. This group eventually formed the strong kingdom of Kandy, in the mountains in the south. In spite of the Portuguese, who destroyed the Tamil kingdom in the north of Ceylon, a large part of the Island was brought under Kandy[1].

§ 8

OTHER HISTORICAL LINKS

The important historical factor which emerges from this review is that during nearly the whole history of Ceylon, up to the beginning of the 16th century, the danger from south India was intermittent. From the 9th century onwards it was pretty constant. After the time of Parakhamabahu I, the south Indians managed to get a firm foothold in the north of the Island, and the Tamil kingdom of Jaffnapatam had become well established by the 14th century; it kept its independence, except for a short period in the reign of Parakramabahu VI and his two successors in the 15th century, till the early 17th, when it was extinguished by the Portuguese. For several reasons, possibly of security from the strategic angle, the Sinhalese kings moved their capitals further south and south-west, and by the time the Portuguese reached Ceylon, early in the 16th century, the capital was situated at Kotte, as we stated above. Thus, during these centuries

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1. Parker: Ancient Ceylon. Chap. 2. Also refer to Baldeens: A Description of the Great and Most Famous Isle of Ceylon. pp. 35-49.

following the quitting of Anuradhapura, the dry zone became less and less populous - may be due to the onslaughts from India, the destruction of the irrigation system, or the increase of malaria - and the Sinhalese began to penetrate into the centre and, particularly, the south-west of the Island, where most of them are to be found today. As they cleared the quick jungle they found good soil, and no lack of water for the growing of rice. During all this period, the Sinhalese remained staunchly Buddhist. The Buddhist religion went through some vicissitudes [1]. The Indian invaders do not seem to have indulged in persecution. But they did pillage, and even destroyed viharas, and built some Hindu temples, at which the Sinhalese people, or some of them, did not hesitate to worship. It is an interesting fact that one of the most famous Hindu temples was sited at Devendra (now known as Dondra), the southernmost point of the Island [2].

But Buddhism itself does not seem to have been greatly influenced by its constant contact with Hinduism during these centuries. At various times sects deemed to be heretical found their way into Ceylon, including the Mahayanist form of Buddhism. But these did not last, and the simpler form, the Hinayama, maintained itself in Ceylon. The kings kept in close touch with the Sangha, and acquired merit by the gift to vihara of lands, together with the services owed by the people on those lands; also

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1. For a good account of Buddhism in Ceylon, refer to Walpola Rahula: op.cit. Chapters 4-8.
2. I saw its remains in March 1963.

by building new viharas or restoring old ones.

The history of the Sinhalese monarchy is, on the whole, not very remarkable[1]. Some kings were noted for saintliness or scholarship - or both. Many of them, for instance Mahasen and Dhatusena, made notable contribution to the great irrigation system, constructing tanks bunds or enlarging old ones. Parakramabahu I was particularly famed for this. A few of them were notoriously wicked[2]; a reigning queen (there were a few of them) poisoned several successive husbands. One fifth century king, Kasyapa I, came to the throne after putting to death the king, his father, as well as all the other members of his family on whom he could lay hands. The story is that one brother escaped - and that it was foretold to Kasyapa that this brother would ultimately bring about his death. Be that as it may - and it worked out that way in the end - Kasyapa quitted Anuradhapura and had built for him a new capital, which is one of the wonders of Ceylon. He had a palace constructed on top of a great rock 800 feet in height called Sigiriya[3], the lion rock, accessible only by a narrow gallery and a perilous climb up a sheer rock face. Below the rock he laid out what must have been a series of beautiful water gardens. In building this palace, a large number of craftsmen from South India were invited. And in fact they became permanently settled in

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1. Perera, F.G.: History of Ceylon for Schools. Chapter I.
2. Ibid.
3. This is from "Sinha" (Lion) and "giri" (Rock).

Ceylon. They were hereditary stone-workers, carvers, sculptors, and painters so that cave and rock had no terror for them. "In their fingers stone was like soap, rock like clay. Working with them were a few Singhala craftsmen, but they were few, and they were more like apprentice pupils"[1]. Kasyapa also engaged bands of Indian musicians and dancers, and they enlivened the evenings with song and dance. The Indian painters had transformed the bare walls of the rock with lovely paintings such as had not been done before on temple walls or ceiling or in any palace mural[2]. The remains of the palace still lie on the top of the rock, the gallery is still there, and skilful archaeological work has discovered and restored the water gardens. The rock itself resembles a crouching lion, and Kasyapa had it carved that way. It is held that one rock face was covered with paintings. This may be so, but anyhow, half-way up it is a tiny cave, inaccessible but for a modern iron spiral stair-case, and on its wall still survive mural paintings of high artistic merit. The rock is one of the most fascinating sights in Asia[3], and conveys to the visitors a vivid impression of the high level of architectural planning and artistic skill which the Sinhalese kings had at their disposal a millenium and a half ago[4].

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1. Vijayatunga: op. cit. p.220.
2. Ibid. p.221.
3. Dhanapala, D.B.: A Short Note on the Technique of the Sigri Picture. University of Ceylon Review. Vol.II. Nos. 1 and 2. 1944.
4. A picturesque account of Sigirya is given by Harry Williams: Ceylon, Pearl of the East. Chapter 11.

With the coming of independence, then, the Sinhalese people not unnaturally cast their mind back to this long pre-European era. The romantic tradition of a glorious past somehow survived, despite the fact that it was a comparatively short time before independence that the history of Ceylon came to be, to any extent, taught in the schools; long enough, however for the younger adult generation to have some knowledge of it. Politically this is of importance, for the two main characteristics of this history are the close inter-dependence of the Government and the Buddhist Sangha, and the feeling that the Tamil is the hereditary enemy who destroyed the ancient cities and made a permanent settlement in the land of the Sinhalese[1].

To the historian, the history of Ceylon before the coming of the European invader shows an Island whose people had a certain sense of racial unity, maintained largely through the Buddhist religion, but, after the 10th century, rarely united effectively under a single ruler: kingdoms rather weaker than the neighbouring kingdoms of southern India, and, therefore, coming every now and again completely under the control of one or the other of them, yet maintaining their indentity by trying, and often succeeding in playing off one of them against the other; but ultimately having to retret to that part of the Island which was more defensible than the ancient northern part - and of the

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1. Lewis, G.E.: Sixty four Years in Ceylon. p.72.

latter, some given up to Tamil settlers, the rest deserted and reverting to the jungle [1]. Economically it was an agricultural country, with the people living largely on rice as their staple food, the products of the coconut palm and some vegetables, and a rather thin, if profitable, trade on the west coast, carried on almost entirely by foreigners, some of whom - the Muslims (later called Moors)- settled in the Island for trading purposes [2]. Culturally, the image of Ceylon included a tradition of learning derived from India, based on a classical language, Pali, and maintained largely by the order of bhikkhus, the Sangha; a tradition of craftsmanship, in relation to sculpture, decorative carving, painting and architecture, some of considerable merit, and greatly influenced through the centuries by the culture of the mainland, yet keeping its native characteristics [3]. Socially, it was in a condition perhaps most easily described as feudal, the relations between rulers and the ruled and between the various grades of society, being based on services in return for the holding of land, interlocked with a pervasive but not too rigid caste system [4].

Throughout these years the conditions in Ceylon remained more or less feudalistic. There were, of course, economic, social, and political changes in the Island;

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1. Ferguson, D : History of Ceylon. Chapter 4.
2. Forbes : Eleven Years in Ceylon. p.71.
3. Coomaraswamy, A.K : The Art and Crafts of India and Ceylon. Chapter 3.
4. The Caste System in Ceylon we discuss in the next chapter.

the basic features of Ceylon's life, however, remained comparatively the same. The great majority of the people lived in villages, producing their own food, clothing and shilter, and depending little on other parts of the country. Agriculture was the basic occupation. It was carried out and organised in a manner which we now associate with what is called feudalism. Since agriculture was the chief means of livelihood, land was the chief source of wealth[1]. The way land was held varied to some extent during these 2,000 years. The idea of ownership was perhaps not the same in the early years as it was in the Kandyan period[2]. Even so, during the more recent past before the arrival of the British, the position was somewhat as follows. In theory the king was the owner of the entire land in the kingdom. The king gave portions of land to those who served him in various capacities. The services which the king required varied from assistance in governing the country to small household duties. To those who performed each kind of service, land was given in various proportions[3]. The chiefs who helped him govern the country were made rulers of large provinces or districts. Others were given smaller lots according to the service performed. The chiefs in turn required services for themselves both for private convenience and for public affairs, and they in their turn gave portions of land to those who

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1. Cook: Geography of Ceylon. Chapter 5.
2. Davy, John: An Account of the Interior of Ceylon. p.21
3. Hussey: Ceylon and World History. Vol.II. Chapter 4.

performed these services. In fact this was the general pattern throughout the country. Temples and devales[1] as much as the government itself depended on services rendered in return for land given. Depending on the person or group of persons for whose benefits the service was performed, the land given bore different names. Some was called "mindagam", (land attached to a small shrine, "minda") other kinds "devalagam" and "viharagam"[2]. Apart from services rendered in return for lands held, the people also had to perform certain general services to the state, such as repair and maintenance of the paths and bridges in their districts. Essentially, therefore, the people provided for their own food, clothing and shelter. Land was the source from which practically everything else could be obtained. For the right of holding the land the people rendered services to the king, the landlords, the temples or "devales" as the case might be[3]. Even so, it is not correct to say that the people lived an entirely self-sufficient life; they did not produce everything they wanted by themselves, and there was a certain amount of trade both within the country and with other countries. Internal trade was more often carried out by exchanging goods or services. Although coins and the use of money were known quite early, they entered very little into economic life[4]. Trade with other countries was largely

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1. As a concession to the Indian queens of Ceylon kings, Devales (image-houses of Hindu gods and goddesses) were built as annexes to Viharas.
2. Keble, W.T.: Ceylon, Beaten Trade. p.73.
3. Perara, W: Ceylon under British Rule. Chapter 5.
4. Philalethes, A.M.: The History of Ceylon. p.88.

concerned with cinnamon, precious stones and elephants. It was, however, very small compared to modern trade.

This system was, generally speaking, the one which satisfied the economic needs of the people in relation to the control they had over nature and in relation to their state of knowledge in regard to producing the things they wanted. When the way they earned their living remained almost unchanged, their rules of conduct in relation to one another also changed very little. These rules were, of course, mostly not written down. They were rules which the people followed because experience showed that to break them would bring about a lack of order among the people[1]. They were also followed because they had been obeyed for generations; they were what we may call customs. Custom, then, ordered the life of the people, which was largely unchanging. As in India, so in Ceylon, custom became the king[2]. The various groups of people living in Ceylon each performed their functions according to the rules of custom. There was a customary way of cultivating land, of performing services for the land, of giving services to the state, and of behaving towards members of the same group and towards members of another group. In Ceylon, for instance, most of the people could be divided into groups according to the work they did[3]. The majority were farmers; some were craftsmen like blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters,

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1. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.18.
2. Ibid. p.19.
3. Ibid. p.20.

masons, etc.; some others were fisherfolk. Some performed certain duties like washing clothes or beating drums; others were potters, herdsmen and so on. The duties of the members of the various groups were fixed by custom. This means that they were expected by the rest of the people to carry out certain functions. Their rights were also fixed by custom[1]. In other words, they knew how the rest of the people should behave towards them, depending on the groups to which they belonged.

Largely owing to the economic functions attached to each group, but partly also owing to the influence of Hinduism, this grouping became what we call the caste system[2]. In Ceylon, therefore, there were a number of castes, and persons belonging to each caste had certain duties and rights fixed by custom[3]. Usually, persons belonging to a particular caste tended to live together in units. For instance, in a particular village, there would often be only persons belonging to a particular caste. By living together, by having similar functions to perform and similar rights and duties, caste-groups living in areas became communities[4]. In pre-modern Ceylon, community living and caste very often coincided. The caste system survived so long because it helped to maintain the feudal society of Ceylon. It was Ceylonese society's way of maintaining itself[5]. It is on these lines that the

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1. Percival: An Account of the Island of Ceylon. p.46.
2. Ryan, B: Caste in Ceylon. Chapter 3.
3. Ibid. p.79.
4. Ibid. p.84.
5. Keble. op. cit. p.94.

castes, communities and villages evolved in India.

The caste system meant that persons belonging to a particular caste lived a special group life. Everyone was born to a caste, and a person could not change his caste[1]. Once he was born to a caste, custom saw to it that he performed certain functions and occupied a known, regulated place in the society. A craftsman's son became a craftsman; a farmer's son became a farmer[2]. Persons belonging to a particular caste generally did not eat with or marry persons belonging to another caste. Inter-caste marriage, especially, would have broken that caste-order which was important in keeping the pattern of society unchanged[3].

So far we have seen how the economic and social life of the people of Ceylon in the pre-modern period was essentially feudal. The way the people were governed, also, was feudal rather than democratic. At the head of the government was the king. He followed the customs of the Island and tried to maintain them, since the people might have opposed a king who broke the customs too frequently. The king could not govern the country by himself, so he received the assistance of chiefs, as in India. The king quite often acted on the advice of these chiefs assembled in council. The king's chiefs were also in charge of the administration of the provinces,

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1. Holden: Ceylon. Chapter 2.
2. Bennett, J.W.: Ceylon and its Capabilities. p.78.
3. Ibid. p.29.

subject to his ultimate control. Just as the king was assisted by his council, the provincial or village government was assisted by various sabhas[1]. These councils were, of course, not elected by the vote of the people as they are today; in the villages, the gam sabhas for instance, were usually composed of the heads of families. Thus, although there was no democracy as we know it today, representative institutions were common[2]. The economic, social and political conditions in Ceylon were feudal during these years. They remained so because little happened to make the people want to change them[3]. During that period of over 2,000 years, the people, generally speaking, earned their living in the same way, followed the same rules of conduct, and were governed in about the same way. The rules of conduct the people followed were, as we noticed earlier, maintained largely by the force of custom[4]. These rules laid down the people's rights and duties[5].

Today, when we think of a country, we think of it as consisting of a number of people living as a community - large or small. In other words, the individual person is thought of as the unit. In old Ceylon, the family was considered the unit in the community[6]. Families belonged to castes, and the rights and duties of the

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1. They closely resembled with Contemporary Indian Sabhas. See Codrington. op. cit. Chapters II-IV.
2. Ibid. p.19.
3. Cordiner, J: A Description of Ceylon. Vol.2. p.110.
4. Forbes. op. cit. p.45.
5. Ibid. p.47.
6. On the Religion and Manners of the People of Ceylon. Asiatic Researches VII. 1803, p.398.

persons who made up the families depended on the caste they belonged to. Some castes were considered higher than others and the persons belonging to higher castes had more rights than those belonging to lower castes[1]. All persons, therefore, did not have equal rights. 'Justice' did not consist in giving every person a minimum of equal rights, as we believe it does in modern society, but in maintaining the unequal rights of the different groups of people. Nor did the people have the freedom to choose how they wished to live their private lives. A person could not choose to do any work other than that which custom fixed for him as a result of his birth in a particular caste[2]. He could not marry anyone outside his caste, and marriages took place according to the usual customs[3]. No person could rise above the station that birth gave him because custom and society prevented him from doing so. Of course, in those days, most of the people were content to follow the work of the castes they belonged to, marry according to custom and live in the station their birth gave them[4]. Those personal and civic freedoms which we value today, and which will be discussed in detail later on, were absent at that time.

Nor did the people have political freedom. They could not control the government as they wished; they could not elect or reject the government by peaceful means. When kings became tyrants or continuously violated

1. Ibid. p.399.
2. Ibid. p.402.
3. Ibid. p.403.
4. Pieris, S. (Trans): Ribeiro's History of Ceilao. Chap. V.

custom, the people rebelled and overthrew them. Usually, however, the people were not interested in the king's government; they only paid the taxes or performed the services and let the chiefs and the kings do much as they wished. Changes in the occupancy of the throne were usually the result of normal succession, foreign invasions or palace intrigues.

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INDO-CEYLON POLITICAL LINKS

It would thus appear that from the earliest times to the 17th century there were extensive contacts between India and Ceylon. There are records which may suggest that Ceylonese rulers accepted the suzerainty of the Maurya emperor, Ashok, who ruled from Pataliputra in the 3rd century B.C., and the Gupta emperor, Samudragupta, who reigned from the same city in the 4th century A.D., and extended his power by conquest as far as the river Krishna[1]. But there is no evidence in India to show that Asoka exercised any control over Ceylon[2]. All that we know from his edicts is that Ceylon was among the countries

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1. In fact, Asoka's empire was perhaps "a loose federation rather than an empire in the commonly accepted sense of the word".. Humayun Kabir: The Indian Heritage. p.57.
2. We have reasons to believe that under Bindusara the empire did not extend beyond what is modern Hyderabad. The only country Asoka forcibly conquered was Kalinga or Orissa. Asoka's empire, however, extended over almost the whole of India. This may be explained by the voluntary adhesion of the smaller republics south of Hyderabad to the loose federal empire of Asoka. Ibid. p.57.

in which he arranged for the care of men and animals, the planting of medicinal herbs, and the spread of the Dhamma. It is the Ceylon chronicles which state that as a result of an embassy sent from Ceylon, Asoka requested that Devanampiya Tissa should be consecrated a second time[1]. If this story means anything, it does not imply that Asoka wanted to exercise suzerainty over Ceylon, but that the king of Ceylon wanted to be under his suzerainty. Indian evidence does not confirm this story. It is clear from Asoka's edicts that he did not place Ceylon within his domains but treated it along with the South Indian kingdoms as independent territory[2].

It is different in the case of Samudragupta. A claim to suzerainty over Ceylon is suggested by him, while Ceylonese records make no reference to such a relationship[3]. In his famous Allahabad Pillar Inscription, Samudragupta gives a detailed account of his conquests and divides the rulers of India into four categories[4]. The fourth consists of rulers who showed him their respect by personal surrender, by sending him gifts as tribute and by petitioning for a charter with the Gupta seal for the enjoyment of their respective territories. Among these were the Saimhalakas or the people of Simhala. Did the

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1. Hussey: Ceylon and World History. Vol.I. Chapter 3.
2. Parker, op. cit. Chapter 4.
3. The only foreign evidence which suggests some kind of subordination of Ceylon to Samudragupta is a Chinese chronicle which says that King Meghavanna sent presents to Samudragupta regularly. Refer to Codrington: op.cit. p.29.
4. The History and Culture of the Indian People. The Classical Age. Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan. Chapter XIV.

people of Ceylon then accept the suzerainty of Samudragupta ? A Chinese record includes the following story[1]. In the reign of Kitti Siri Meghavanna (301-328) two Ceylonese Buddhist monks went to Buddha Gaya to visit the sacred places of Buddhists. On their return, they complained of the inconvenience they went through for want of accommodation. Thereupon the King of Ceylon sent an embassy with presents to the Indian Emperor seeking permission to build a monastery there. The request was granted and a monastery was built. But even if Kitti Siri Meghavanna accepted the suzerainty of Samudragupta, it does not appear to have led to the payment of regular tribute or to any control of Ceylon by the Indian Emperor[2].

On the other hand, it was natural for South Indian rulers to attempt to gain control of the Island. Ceylon was comparatively more fertile and wealthier than any part of South India and whoever gained control of it, acquired status, power and wealth.

As far back as the second century B.C., according to the Pali Chronicles, three Tamils, Sena, Guttika and Elara ruled over Ceylon. We have neither sufficient evidence about Sena and Guttika, nor reliable information about Elara to say anything definite about them. It is not clear whether they were invaders from South India, or

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1. Ibid. p.284-285.
2. Ibid. p.286.

members of a local Tamil trade-guild, or both. Nor do we know what factors helped them to come into power or maintain their hold on the throne. The other legend that King Karikala of Chola invaded Ceylon about the second century A.D. and carried away many prisoners and that Gajabahu I retaliated with a counter invasion and brought back twice as many, has no basis of truth and it is needless to devote any time to the examination of this story[1].

There were two definite invasions of Ceylon in the first century B.C. in the time of Vattagamani Abhaya, and in the 5th century B.C. when the rebel Mittasena was ruling over the Island[2]. It is not known who exactly these invaders were. Their names suggest that they were connected in some way with the Pandyan royal family. In the first century B.C. there were often wars in South India between the rulers of Pandya, Chola and Kerala. In the fifth century, South India was in the hands of the Kalabhras[3] and it is likely that many princes and chieftains who fought against them were deprived of their territories. It appears that in both these instances, some such chieftains taking advantage of the unsettled state of the Island at that time, invaded Ceylon successfully and made themselves masters of the northern plain. They maintained their power with the aid of their armies and seem to have won over some of the Sinhalese chieftains

1. Ibid. pp.264-265.
2. Ibid. p.285.
3. Ibid. pp.265-67. Also refer to Sastri,K.A.Nilakantha: The Pandyan Kingdom. pp.41-42.

to their side. They did not derive any support from their mother country, and before long lost their hold over Ceylon[1].

In fact to understand Ceylon's political relations with India up to the advent of Europeans, we have got to keep in mind the political conditions in India during those times. From the 7th century onwards it will be impossible for us to follow these relations unless we have a clear idea of the political changes and the rise and fall of kingdoms that took place at least in the Deccan. The political history of the Deccan and South India consisted mainly of a series of wars between the various kingdoms for supremacy[2]. Sometimes the kings of South India fought with one another, and the kings of the Deccan did the same. At other times, if a ruler in South India became powerful, he fought with the rulers of the Deccan, or the rulers of the Deccan took the initiative and fought with the rulers of South India who were growing in power. These kingdoms consisted also of many sub-kingdoms ruled by hereditary princes or chiefs who acknowledged the suzerainty of the chief ruler. All these feudatories had their own military forces to maintain their power and generally went to the aid of their suzerains during wars, or, if they felt that their suzerain was weak and his kingdom was likely to break up, they asserted their independence or accepted the lordship of another suzerain[3]. Thus the boundaries of these

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1. Mendis, G.C.: The Early History of Ceylon. Chapter III.
2. Hussey, D.M.: op. cit. Vol. I. Chapter 3.
3. Edger, T.: Castes and Tribes of South India. Vol.V. Chapter II.

kingdoms constantly changed and it is by no means easy to follow their fortunes.

Another fact we have to remember about these kingdoms is that they were never states in the modern sense. They cannot be compared with the post-fifteenth century European states such as England, France and Spain. These Indian rulers interfered very rarely with the social life of the people apart from building temples and endowing them. What they were mainly concerned with was the collection of the revenue with which they maintained their armies and the royal courts and endowed religious establishments[1]. So did the sub-kings or the feudatories in their own territories, but they paid in addition a part of their revenue as tribute to their suzerains. It was in order to increase this revenue that the rulers tried to make further conquests, and in order to escape this tribute that feudatories looked forward to becoming independent. Very often these wars were nothing more than raids to collect booty and exact tribute from the defeated rulers. If the ruler who was attacked did not submit, the general practice was not for the conqueror to appoint one of his own generals as ruler but to replace the vanquished ruler with another member of the same royal family who agreed to accept the conqueror as the suzerain[2].

The relations between the Sinhalese kings and these Indian rulers from the 7th centuryonwards depended mainly on four factors. Firstly, rival claimants to the

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1. Panikkar, K.M.: A Survey of Indian History. Chapter X.
2. Ibid. p.92.

throne of Ceylon often sought help from Indian rulers[1]. Secondly, whenever a ruler of Pandya was successful in expanding his territory, or when any ruler of any other Kingdom occupied Pandya, he often raided Ceylon and carried away booty, at times imposing a tribute. On two occasions, Chola first, and Pandya next, not only invaded Ceylon but occupied a portion of it and placed one of their own generals as the ruler of Ceylon. Thirdly, from the 9th century Ceylon entered the orbit of South Indian politics and took part in South Indian struggles in order to prevent a single ruler in South India from becoming too powerful and from invading Ceylon. Finally, Ceylon itself in the time of Parakramabahu I supported one of the claimants to the throne of Pandya[2]. Parakramabahu in doing so, waged war against the powerful Emperors of Chola, and had he been successful, he would have made Pandya a feudatory state.

If we want to follow those developments in detail, we have to acquaint ourselves with the political developments of India stage by stage. These are graphically detailed by Dr. G.C.Mendis :

> " After the break-up of the Maurya Empire the Deccan came under the rule of the Satavahamas who continued to rule till the 3rd century A.D. With their fall a number of petty rulers divided their territory. One of those the Pallavas, a dynasty of North Indian origin, ruled over S.E.Deccan. With the fall of the Kalabhras at the end of the sixth

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1. Rasanayagam, Mudaliyar: Ancient Jaffna. Chapter VII.
2. Codrington. op. cit. pp. 85-86.

> century A.D., the Pallavas under Simhavishnu extended their power as far as the Kaveri, i.e. the region originally occupied by the Cholas, making Kanchi or modern Conjeevaram to the south of Madras their capital, while a chief called Kadunkeon made himself master of Pandya. About the same time the Chalukyas made themselves masters of the Deccan".(1)

The political history of these regions thereafter consists of the attempts of these powers to extend their territory. In the middle of the 8th century the main branch of the Chalukya family which ruled the western part of the Deccan was ousted from power by their feudatory, the Rashtrakutas. The Pallavas and the Pandyas maintained their power for another century, till the Cholas, the feudatory of the Pallavas, defeated both their suzerain as well as the Pandyas, and became in the 10th century, the rulers of the whole of South India[2]. It was during the rule of the successors of the Pallava Simhavishnu that Mahavamma, the son of Kasyapa II, went to the Pallava court, took part in the wars against the Chalukyas, came back to Ceylon with Pallava forces and succeeded on his second attempt in winning back the throne of his father. It was Sri Mara Sri Vallabha, one of the successors of Kadunkon who gradually expanded the territory of the Pandya Kingdom, that raided Ceylon in the time of Sena I (833-53). It was also against him that Sena II joined a South Indian confederacy led by the Pallavas, invaded Pandya, sacked the city of Madura and helped to place Varagunavarnam II on the throne of Pandya[3].

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1. Ibid. Chapter V.
2. Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 2.
3. Ibid. p.23.

It was when these wars led to the exhaustion of both the Pallavas and the Pandyas that a feudatory of the Pallavas, the Chola Aditya, began to expand his power at the expense of the Pallavas[1]. It was his successor Parantaka I (907-955) who invaded Pandya and then Ceylon because the Sinhalese King Kasyapa V (914-923) sent an army in support of the Pandya King. But Parantaka could not carry on the war for long in Ceylon, as in 949 the Rashtrakutas who were expanding their power northwards and southwards attacked the Chola Kingdom[2].

Ceylon had relations with the Rashtrakutas too. It is not known whether Manavamma accepted the suzerainty of the Pallavas. But when the Rashtrakutas defeated the Pallavas and occupied Kanchi about 804, Aggabodhi VIII appears to have sent an embassy and accepted their suzerainty. The Rashtrakutas claim that nine years after they defeated Parantaka I, they invaded Ramesvaram and exacted tribute from Ceylon[3]. The Ceylon chronicles, on the other hand, claim that the Sinhalese General of Mahinda IV defeated them and entered into a treaty with them[4]. Mahinda IV (956-972) too helped Pandya to rebel against the Cholas, and when Parantaka II after defeating the Pandyas invaded Ceylon, he is said to have been defeated by the same Sinhalese General at Kayts.

The rise of the Cholas in South India in the

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1. The Classical Age. pp.247-249.
2. Panikkar. op. cit. pp.60 ff.
3. The Classical Age. pp.183-87.
4. Ibid. p.188.

10th century was followed by a change in the Deccan in the latter half of the same century. In 973 the Western Chalukya feudatory, Taila II ousted the Rashtrakutas and became master of Western Deccan[1]. Rajaraja I (985-1015) sometime later began to expand theChola Kingdom[2]. He subdued Pandya and Kerala and occupied the northern part of Ceylon[3]. After that he expanded the territory northwards occupying Mysore as well as Vengi, the territory between the Krishna and the Godavari, ruled by the Eastern Chalukyas. His son Rajendra (1014-1044) continued the expansion of the Chola dominions. He drove the Chalukyas further back, and subdued the East Ganga ruler of Kalinga with whom Mahinda IV had formed a marriage alliance. From there he made an expedition as far as the Ganges. In the South he completed the conquest of Ceylon and subdued the Kingdom of Sri Vijaya which included the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java and other islands and commanded the trade routes to the East[4]. It was against him and his successors that Vikramabahu and Vijayabahu I of Ceylon waged war and their successes depended on the extent of the failure of the Cholas against their opponents in the north. It was finally a war of succession in Chola itself that helped Vijayabahu I to expel the Cholas from Ceylon. After that it was to safeguard himself

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1. Mendis. op. cit. p.24.
2. Ibid. p.25.
3. Ibid. p.26.
4. Codrington. op. cit. p.65.

from Kulottunga I, the new ruler who restored the Chola dominion, that he allied himself with the Western Chalukyas and the Kalingas [1].

It is thus clear that the History of Indo-Ceylon relations during this period is one of constant turmoil and conflict. Gradually when the Chola power began to decline during the latter half of the 12th century, Parakramabahu I interfered in the affairs of South India [2]. The Chola power had now become so ineffective that Kulasekhara of Tinnevelly contested the right of Parakramabahu to the throne of Madura. The Pandya King sought the help of Ceylon. The Sinhalese monarch thereupon sent an army under General Lankapura, but in the meantime the Pandyan king had been slain and his capital Madura taken. The Sinhalese army, however, landed on the opposite coast, and carried on the war against the usurper in the neighbourhood of Ramnad, where they built a fortress styled Parakramapura. The result of this stage of the campaign was the defeat of Kulasekhara and the restoration and crowning of the Pandyan king's son, Vira Pandya, in his ancient capital. Kulasekhara, however, continued the struggle, but at last was compelled to take refuge with the Chola and enlist their help. Whether the Sinhalese ultimately were so successful as made out by the Mahavamsa, is more than doubtful [3]; the Chola records claim that Lankapura was defeated and his head nailed to the gates of

1. Ibid. pp.60-61.
2. Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 2.
3. Geiger (Ed): Mahavamsa, p.164.

Madura with those of his generals, Kulasekhara regaining his throne [1]. The war of the Pandyan succession did not end here; in the thirteenth year of the Chola king Rajadhiraja II (A.D. 1175) we hear of Sinhalese victories, and by the fourth year of Kulottunga Chola III (1181) Vira Pandya had been again expelled, and the Sinhalese soldiers driven into the sea. But the Sinhalese hold on Ramesvaram at least continued for some time, as Nisanka Malla claims to have built the Nissankesvara temple there [2].

The Chalukya Empire disintegrated at the end of the 12th century and the Chola Empire at the end of the 13th century. Pandya made use of these developments to expand its power [3]. Its power at first was checked by the new Hoysala power [4] of Mysore. But Jatavarman Sundara Pandya (1251-1268) fought the Hoysalas and made himself supreme over Chola, Kerala, and NorthCeylon. North Ceylon had more than one ruler during the 13th century, and a minister of one of these appealed to Pandya for help. This led to a second invasion of North Ceylon by a Pandya prince, Iatayarman Vira Pandya. But it was Manavarman Kulasekhara (1268-1309) who taking advantage of a famine conquered Ceylon in about 1280. After his representative, Arya Chakravarti, had ruled over Ceylon for about twenty years South Ceylon was handed over to Parakhamabahu III,

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1. Panikkar. op. cit. Chapter X.
2. Geiger. op. cit. pp.62-63
3. Codrington. op. cit. pp. 80-87.
4. Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 2.

who acknowledged the suzerainty of Pandya. His successor Bhuvanekabahu II asserted his independence about 1310 when a war of succession broke out in Pandya, and Pandya was invaded by a Muslim force[1].

From the confusion that followed in the Deccan and South India, there arose two kingdoms, that of the Muslim Bahamanis in the North and the Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar in the south. The Bahamanis kept the Vijayanagra kings busy. Hence the Vijayanagara rulers interfered little with Ceylon. They invaded the Tamil Kingdom in the North, first in the reign of Hari-Hara II (1377-1404) and again in the reign of Deva Raya II (1426-1446) and exacted tribute from it. It was the death of Deva Raya II and the Muslim invasions that followed that enabled Parakramabahu VI to restore Sinhalese rule in the North[2].

After the Portuguese came to the East and gained gradual control of the seas, Ceylon had little to do with South Indian rulers. However, when there were rivals to the throne of Kotte and Jaffna and one party tried to obtain help from India, Vijayabahu VIII (1518-1521) received help from the Zamorin of Calicut and Sangkily of Jaffna was aided at the beginning of the 17th century by the Raja of Tanjore[3].

Once the Portuguese gained control of the coastal provinces Ceylon's political connections with Indian rulers

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1. J.R.A.S. (CB) XXXII. Nos. 85 and 86.
2. Rajavansaya. Colombo Museum MSS. No.15
3. Pieters,S (Trans): Memoirs of the Dutch Governor of Ceylon. p.73.

ceased, but not with India[1]. The Portuguese in Ceylon were controlled by the Viceroy of Goa and the Captain-General of Ceylon was directly under him. When the Dutch replaced the Portuguese the Dutch Governors of Ceylon controlled the southern-most part of India[2]. When Ceylon was captured by the British, from 1706-1798 the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon were ruled by the Madras Government, and from 1798-1801 Ceylon was treated as a Presidency of India. These, in the main, were the political relations Ceylon had with India before the advent of the Europeans.

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THE COMING OF THE PORTUGUESE.

Ceylon was first visited by the Portuguese when Francisco de Almeida landed there in 1505. He found the Island divided into seven kingdoms, each ruled by its separate monarch and each frequently at odds with one or more of its neighbours. In 1517 a fort was erected at Colombo by orders of the Viceroy at Goa, with the permission of the king of Kotte; and from this time onward until the end of the 16th century the Portuguese were constantly at war with one or another of the native kingdoms. It is claimed that, when attacking and conquering Jaffna (Jaffna-patam) they obtained possession of the Tooth relic, and, in spite of the enormous ransom offered for it, publicly burned it in the market place at Goa in

1. Ibid. p.62.
2. Ibid. p.71.

CEYLON.
PORTUGUESE PERIOD.
(1505-1658)
Jaffna
SAFFNA
Mannar
VANNI
Trincomalee
Kottiyar
Kalpitiya
Kala oya
Puttalam
SEVEN KORALES
Batticaloa
Matale
Harispattuwa
Tumpane
Gannoruwa
Balana
Kandy
Dumbara
Bantenna
Aleuktiru Korale
FOUR KORALES
Hevaheta
Yatinuwara
Siyane Korale
Alutnagala
KANDY
COLOMBO
Malvana
Malleriyava
Badulla
Uva
Kolle
Hewagam korale
Kotmale
Rayigam Korale
Panava
Kalutara
Pasdun Korale
Denavaka
Palenda
Maggona
Beruvela
Valallaviti Korale
Alutgama
MATARA DISAVANI
Bentota
Giruwa
Akuressa
Galle
Matara
Dondra

obedience to the archbishop, who would not suffer the Viceroy to make money out of the sale of what He accounted an idol. The Sinhalese priesthood, who still possess the Tooth relic, the shrine of which is at Kandy, assert that the object captured at Jaffna was a false tooth[1].

The Portuguese won a firm foothold on the western littoral, and they succeeded in converting the bulk of the "Karawa" or fisher-caste Sinhalese to Christianity. Conversions upon a considerable scale, but almost invariably among the lower-caste sections of the population, were similarly effected in other parts of the Island. As estimated in 1946, Christians numbered 603,235 or nearly 10 per cent of the total population of Ceylon, most of them being Roman Catholics.[2] The proselytizing fervour and cynical rapacity of the Portuguese won for them hosts of enemies among the natives of all the ranks, while their inherited traditional hatred for the Moors - by which term they described all Mohammedans - rendered the Portuguese peculiarly odious to the latter, whose trade and shipping monopolies they had destroyed. The French, the Dutch and the British, when in turn they defied the Bull of Alexander VI and forced their way into the Indian ocean, were accordingly welcomed as deliverers by the people of the east generally; and the trading centres the Portuguese had

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1. Williams, H: op. cit. p.138.
2. One of the Portuguese Captains-Generals, Constantine de Saa sent an expedition to the east coast of the Island and captured Trincomalee; he destroyed a famous Hindu temple and built a fort on its site. This piece of information I got from a notice on the entrance of the fort.

established in the beginning with such dauntless courage, where they had exploited and persecuted the native populations so ruthlessly, fell before the Dutch and the British, who often fought in alliance with native potentates[1].

The Dutch captain Joria Spilberg landed on the east coast of Ceylon in 1602 and was welcomed by the king of Kandy, who besought him to help in the ejection of the hated Portuguese[2]. No action of importance was taken, however, until 1638-39, when a Dutch expedition attacked and destroyed the Portuguese forts on the east coast. In 1644, Negombo, which had once before been unsuccessfully attacked, fell to the Dutch; and in 1656 and 1658 Colombo and Jaffna were successively captured[3]. The Dutch thus became masters of practically the whole of the Maritime Provinces of Ceylon, the kingdom of Kandy alone retaining its independence. The Dutch forthwith set about the task of the methodical and efficient administration of the country in a fashion never attempted by the Portuguese[4]. They taxed the people heavily, but the land registers which they instituted have endured to this day, as also has Roman-Dutch law, many of the provisions of which are now deeply ingrained in the traditions of the Low Country Sinhalese peasantry and land-holders. They also undertook public works upon a considerable scale and

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1. Pakeman, S.A.: Ceylon. 1964. Chapter 3.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 5. 1953. p.179.
3. Ibid. p.180.
4. Ibid.

built excellent houses for their own accommodation, public offices, law courts and churches, many of which still survive; the roads which they made opened up the interior and greatly stimulated the trade of the Island. Tolerant to Buddhism, Hinduism and Mohammedanism, they persecuted the Catholics persistently, but the religion which had been acquired by thousands of Sinhalese and by the Ceylon-born Tamils of Jaffna and Mannar was too deeply rooted in the peoples' hearts for its extirpation to be possible. Throughout the Dutch period Kandy maintained its independence[1].

The British, who had despatched a fruitless mission to the king of Kandy from Madras as early as 1762, after various naval skirmishes in the neighbourhood of Trincomalee and Batticaloa, sent a well-equipped force against the Dutch in Ceylon in 1795, met with only a feeble resistence and in less than a year had obtained possession of the Island[2]. The Dutch rule had lasted for about 140 years, a period equal to that of Portuguese domination; but while the latter left Ceylon more distracted and no more developed than what they had found it on their arrival, the Dutch administration, if somewhat harsh and unimaginative, worked genuine and permanent improvement in almost every branch of the social and economic life of the people[3]. The Dutch practice, followed by them for so long in almost all their overseas possessions,

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1. Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 5.
2. Ibid. p.50.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 3.

CEYLON
Dutch Period.
(1658-1796)
Jaffna
JAFFNA
COMMANDERY
AFTER THE TREATY OF 1766
NUVARAKALAVIYA
Trincomalee.
Kottiyar
Kalpitiya
Kala oya
TAMANKADUVA
Puttalam
COLOMBO COMMANDERY
SEVEN KORALES
Batticaloa
Chilaw
FOUR KORALES
Kandy
Negombo
Malvana
THREE KORALES
Gampola
Hanguranketa.
COLOMBO
K. Ganga
SABARAGAMUVA
Kalu Ganga
VELLASSA.
Kalutara
Bentota River
GALLE COMMANDRY
Galle
Matara

of taking over oppressive local systems of taxation, (which had been endurable only because evasion was so common) and thereafter applying them with ruthless efficiency made their rule highly unpopular; and even today the Burghers, who are the descendants of the former Dutch rulers and settlers, are far from being loved by the Sinhalese. These Ceylonese Dutchmen, though many of their families have dilutions of oriental blood in their veins, have retained their national character, their steady self-esteem, their traditions and high ideals of probity and conduct in a very remarkable degree[1]. Over a long period they had a practical monopoly of the clerical work in most public departments and held most positions of trust in public departments and commercial houses[2].

At first Ceylon was administered from Madras, but an attempt to apply the Madras revenue system and the employment of a host of Malabar collectors led to a rebellion. The treaty of Amiens (1802) formally ceded Ceylon to Great Britain and it became a British Crown Colony; the following year Kandy was invaded and occupied. The garrison was treacherously massacred after it had been induced to lay down its arms. The story of the struggle for independence in Ceylon from 1803 to 1818 is exceedingly interesting and to this we will shortly turn. But before we do so, we must briefly touch on the impact of the Dutch and Portuguese rule on Indo-Ceylon

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1. Williams, H: Ceylon. pp.95-98.
2. Ibid. p.103.

relations.

Neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch did introduce any basic or fundemental innovation in the social or economic structure of Ceylon. They refrained from tempering with the social system of the Island and the institutions of government based on it; what they did was to adapt it for their own purposes[1]. But their coming had one major effect. From the earliest times influences from the mainland of India had been very strong. It is only one of the accidents of history that the Island was never absorbed into one or the other of the Indian kingdoms - it nearly happened more than once. But once the Europeans had come with sea power, the old contacts were cut off, or at least gradually diminished and it is only in comparatively recent times that they have been renewed[2]. It is important to emphasise that the headquarters of the Portuguese in Asia was at Goa (where they remained till 1961). Whereas their expansion from that base into India was not possible for reasons beyond the scope of this dissertation; they did enter Ceylon. By taking advantage of the division between the rulers of the Sinhalese kingdoms they extinguished all of them except the <u>Udarata</u> (the kingdom of Kandy) which remained impregnable in the mountains, due to the nature of the terrain, the guerilla tactics of the Sinhalese, and that insidious enemy - the

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1. Pieters, S. (Trans): Members of the Dutch Governors of Ceylon. pp. 66-71.
2. Mendis. op. cit. pp. 48 ff.

malaria mosquito[1]. The Kandyan kingdom, therefore, survived up to the time of the British occupation. For the rest, the Europeans brought the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna under their suzerainty and early in the 17th century conquered it[2]. While the Portuguese ruling clique was most unpopular in the Island, it was slightly different with the missionary priests and friars[3]. It was their professed object to "convert the heathen" and in this they had remarkable success. Some of the people of Ceylon undoubtedly adopted Christianity for the sake of loaves and fishes; but many were genuine converts, and to this day there are many thousands of Roman Catholics in Ceylon, especially on the West coast. They built churches and schools, not hesitating to destroy Buddhist and Hindu temples.

On the whole, however, the Portuguese interfered but little with local laws, customs and methods of administration. They usually put their own people, or Christian converts on whom they felt they could depend, into the higher posts. Only a few Sinhalese adopted the Portuguese way of living; and similarly a few Portuguese settlers adopted Sinhalese or Tamil customs. But where they married the native women, the cultural interchange was profound. For most of the 16th century, the Portuguese were content to trade, using the Sinhalese kings as puppets;

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1. Pieris, P.E. (Trans): Ribeiro's History of Ceilao. Chapter 5.
2. Pakeman. op. cit. pp. 40 ff.
3. Smith, V: History of Ceylon. p.91.

more than once they were in serious danger of being driven out. It was only the arrival of reinforcements from Goa or Cochin which saved them. Their contributions to Ceylon's life included cinnamon trade, the use of guns and cannon. There is evidence to show that the kings of Sitavaka adopted the Portuguese methods of warfare to fight them. They also contributed to the architecture of Ceylon. The broad window in most houses inCeylon (called Janela)[1], and the round form of tile commonly used there are of Portuguese origin. Words like Janela, mese[2] (table) and almaria[3] (Wardrobe) are derived from Portuguese. They also contributed to the dress and many words relating to it are common to both India and Ceylon. Words such as Kamisa[4] (Shirt), Kalisan (trousers), mes (stockings), sapattu (shoes), lensuwa (handkerchief), alpennetti[5] (pins), bottama[6] (button) are of Portuguese derivation. To the introduction of Christianity we have already referred. It is important to remember that the Roman Catholic Church differed from Buddhism and Hinduism in many ways[7]. The Church dogmas and doctrines, in some ways, influenced people's attitude to life. For instance, they went against the beliefs in Karma and rebirth[8].

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1. In Hindi, Jangla.
2. In Hindi, Mez.
3. In Hindi, Almari.
4. In Hindi, Kamiz.
5. In Hindi, Alpin.
6. In Hindi, Batan.
7. It was controlled by the Pope; its clergy not only preached and performed religious rites but demanded an adherance to its rules from the laity and punished them if they did not obey.
8. Hetherington, H.J.W.: "Conflicting Obligations" (a) Individual Action. Christianity and the Present Moral Unrest. 1926. Chapter VII.

But it cannot be argued that the Portuguese rule (1505 to 1658) was a turning point in the internal history of Ceylon. The Portuguese period is really a continuation of the history of the Sinhalese-Tamil kingdoms[1]. But externally it proved to be a landmark. In the 15th century Tamil influence over the Sinhalese Court was considerable, and Ceylon might have come under the rule of Madura or Tanjore but for the arrival of the Portuguese. It is undoubtedly the Portuguese who checked this growing influence of South India and laid Ceylon open to the influence of the West. Finally, it may be stated that the Muslims had been expanding their trade towards the East from the 8th century onwards. In Ceylon they had established themselves in Colombo and Beruvala and were taking part in the internal trade of the Island. It was quite on the cards that some parts of Ceylon would have come under Muslim rule as it happened in Indonesia[2]. That would have materially affected Indo-Ceylon relations all along. This possibility was thwarted by the Portuguese who destroyed Muslim trade in the Indian Ocean and opened the trade of the East finally to the Dutch and the British[3].

So far as the Dutch are concerned, they ruled from 1658 to 1796 - 138 years. During these years they were involved only in a few wars. They had to fight with the

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1. Tennent, E : Ceylon. Vol. II. Chapter 4.
2. Heydt : Ceylon. p.39.
3. A good description of the Portuguese rule in Ceylon is found in Jesuit Father Queyroz: The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon.

Kandyan kings in order to stabilize their position in the areas they had snatched from the Portuguese; they also fought when their position was threatened by the king's negotiations with the British. But trade was their primary concern and in effect they ruled over an area much smaller than that which the Portuguese governed[1]. In the South-West, they ruled over the coastal belt, extending for about 20 miles inland, from the Maha Oya to the Valava Ganga; in the north only over the Jaffna Peninsula, and to a lesser extent over the District of Mannar[2]. For the rest, they occupied only sea ports such as Trincomalee, Kottiyar, Batticaloa, and Kalpitiya with a view to preventing foreigners from entering the Kandyan kingdom and from taking a share in the trade of the Island, and to retaining control over the supply of salt[3].

It must be emphasised that the attitude of the Dutch towards the Kandyan kings differed markedly from the arrogant attitude of the Portuguese. The latter had insisted that the Sinhalese rulers were the vassals of the king, and should pay tribute on that account. They had even forced one of the Sinhalese kings to make over his kingdom to the king of Portugal. The Dutch, on the other hand, regarded themselves, at least in theory, the king's allies; the king of Ceylon insisted on treating them as subjects[4]. The Dutch policy was to keep their relations with Ceylonese

1. Anthonisz, R.G.: The Dutch in Ceylon. Chapter III.
2. Ibid. p.63.
3. The Dutch are reported to have told the king of Ceylon, Rapa Singha II (1629-87), "Give us cinnamon, or we stop the salt for your kitchen". Vijaya Tunga op. cit.155. Also see Pakeman: op. cit. p.45.
4. Pakeman: op. cit. p.44.

as sweet as possible. They were quite content with the administrative system they found in Ceylon, except that where chaos had set in, they constructed a reasonably orderly machine of government[1]. They introduced the Dutch form of administration only in Colombo, Galle, and Jaffna[2]. For the rest the feudal system persisted. They refrained from meddling with the social structure of the Island. Far from breaking the caste system, they rigidly observed it to get the essential services performed. They even created a special caste of cinnamon-peelers (Chalyas)[3]. They did their best to encourage agriculture and develop crafts. They set up a system of schools, primarily for the training of minor members of the administration, locally recruited, but also for proselytising purposes. Their superior posts were held by Dutchmen and the lesser ones by those who settled in Ceylon but had inter-married with the people. Inter-marriages were, of course, discouraged. Such of the Sinhalese and Tamils as had accepted the Dutch Reformed Church[4] and the Muslims were at times persecuted, the latter for political and economic reasons. They also built roads and canals[5]. Their most important contributions were the Roman Dutch Law (which remains the

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1. Anthonisz, R.G.: op. cit. p.49.
2. It was only in these towns that they set up courts of justice of the Dutch type and enforced Roman Dutch law. They also set up <u>Landraads</u> in rural areas to settle the dispute between the Sinhalese and the Tamils relating to lands, contracts, and debts. But the law followed here was local, and the Judges were native.
3. Pakeman: op. cit. p.45.
4. Ibid. p.46.
5. The canals were made for irrigation purposes or to drain marshy lands. A road was opened from Mannar to Matara.

basis of the law of Ceylon even today) and the Dutch-Burgher Community. They also codified the Tamil Law - the Thesawalamai - which applies to the Tamils even now. They also contributed to Ceylonese architecture. Words such as istoppuva (Verandah) soldare (upstairs), and tarappuva (staircase) are the Dutch origin. They established the carpentary industry in Moratuva and the tile industry in Kalaniya.

The importance of the Dutch rule in the history of Ceylon is two-fold. First, the Dutch system of government survived the Dutch rule for decades so that their influence also lasted beyond the period of their rule; secondly, their rule pushed up Ceylon from the medieval period to the modern. This it did in three ways. First, it developed means of communications and transport [1]; secondly, it introduced elementary education in the Island [2]; and thirdly, it brought the Reformed Church which cared little for religious ceremonial and stressed the education of the people so that they might read the Bible and learn the Christian tenets [3]. But that is all. The Dutch rule did not, and could not, usher in radical changes. The Sinhalese and the Tamil systems were, on the whole, left intact. Most of the changes to which we referred affected a small area; the mainstream of people's life remained untouched.

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 3.
2. Mendis. op. cit. p.58.
3. Ibid. p.59.

The Portuguese and the Dutch rule, together modified the pattern of relations between India and Ceylon. The political contact between the two was snapped. The 16th century was the heyday of Muslim rule in the sub-continent - the time of Akbar the Great and the Moghul emperors who succeeded him. Though these monarchs were rich, powerful and ambitious, they made no serious attempt to extend their direct rule over southern India; the kingdom there was busy in its own affairs and its ends were tied up; it found no time for aggression against Ceylon[1]. Some other effects of the Portuguese and the Dutch rule must also be noted for they have their effect on the present Indo-Ceylon relations and also on Ceylon's internal policies. Their rule brought about the separation between the Tamil kingdom of Jaffna and the Sinhalese parts of the Island[2]. The latter always remained a distinct and seperate unit. The Portuguese-Dutch rule helped the process of making Ceylon a plural society[3]. Finally, the continuing existence of the independent kingdom of Kandy was a constant feature from 1505 to 1796. The Sinhalese people there, not being exposed to European influences as were those in the low country, tended to grow somewhat apart from them, though the latter would gladly have come in with them had it ever been possible to get rid of the invaders[4]. This division of the "low-country" and the "up-country" Sinhalese had very vital effect on the estate life in Kandy,

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1. Couto, D: History of Ceylon. Trans- Donald Ferguson. Chapter 6.
2. Ibid. p.42.
3. Bailey, S: Ceylon. Hutchinson's Series. Chapter II.
4. Bennett, J.W.: Ceylon and its Capabilities. p.32.

and on the plantation labour policy of the British in the 19th century. This we examine in Chapter 6 in detail. Presently we turn to the coming of the British in Ceylon.

$ 11

THE COMING OF THE BRITISH

In Kandy, Rajadhi Sinha died in 1798.[1] Pilame Talawe, the first adigar or prime minister who had a great influence over the state, acted most unscrupulously in placing on the throne a Malabar youth of inferior rank under the name of Vikrama Raja Sinha, to the exclusion of all other members of the royal family[2]. This led to a series of plots and counter-plots of a confused nature, taking advantage of which the British steadily promoted their interest. According to Cordiner, the chief adigar Pilame himself was plotting against the life of Vikrama whom he had elevated to the throne and sought the assistance of the British Government to accomplish his object. The British in their own interest were inducing the raja to put his person and his court in their keeping in Colombo for greater safety, leaving the exercise of his power in Kandy into the hands of the minister, the

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1. Towards the middle of the 18th Century, an important change took place in the Kandyan kingdom. It had become the practice of its kings to seek for brides from the royal houses of the south Indian kingdoms, instead of, as formerly, from noble families among the Sinhalese. So that when, in 1739, the line of Raja Sinha II died out, in the person of his grandson, the kingdom passed to the deceased king's mother-in-law, who was by race south Indian. He took the Sinhalese name of Sri Vijaya Rupasinha and became a Buddhist.
2. KNIGHTON: Ceylon. pp. 310 ff.

'treacherous' Pilame, who, it was hoped, could be prevailed upon to maintain a British subsidiary force by paying sufficient indemnity for its expense. To enforce compliance with this policy, General MacDowall was sent on a mission with sufficient force[1], but the game was seen through. Both the king and the minister now united their strength to oppose British encroachments. Thus baffled, Lord North, the governor ofCeylon, made a precipitate declaration.of war against Kandy. The war lasted from 1803 to 1805, with vicissitudes. The Kandyan court conducted the war vigorously. Pilame played the most cunning and efficacious part in opposition to the English. He offered ten rupees for the head of everyEuropean, and tried by various means to get possession of the person of Lord North[2]. The Kandyans fought desperately and adopted every means to destroy the lives of their enemies; they even poisoned the water of the wells and tanks which the British soldiers were likely to use[3]. On the British side, their policy was ill-conceived and was calculated in the end to rouse the indignation of the people to such an extent that they had to beat a hasty retreat. They set up one Mutuswamy as a rival to the king of Kandy and placed him on the throne there. But the new king 'brought no accession of strength'. On June 24, 1803, vast masses of the Ceylonese headed by the king and his minister attacked with tremendous

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1. Mill: VIII. pp. 62-63. Cambridge History V. pp.403-4.
2. Knighton: Ceylon. p.313.
3. Gentleman's Magazine, July 1817. pp.22-24. National Archives of Ceylon.

force the British outpost at Kandy which was easily taken. Major Davie capitulated; he was indeed permitted to evacuate with Mutuswamy, the 'pretender' in his charge, accompanied by the garrison, but he was not able to save any one of them. All were killed at some stage or the other during the retreat, and even hospital patients of whom a hundred and thirty-two were British soldiers were barbarously put to death[1].

Emboldened by this success, the Kandyan king led a series of forays into the British colony for expelling them from the Island, and on one occasion the Kandyan forces came within fifteen miles of Colombo. The English were at last strengthened by the arrival of fresh reinforcements. Several spirited incursions were made; Captain Johnston, continually skirmishing, fought his way to Kandy, and brought the court to terms. Cordiner says that the war was most unsatisfactorily terminated by what has been termed 'a tacit suspension of hostilities'[2].

Soon after the war, Kandy relapsed into anarchy owing to the insane cruelty of its king Vikrama. A struggle for power between the king and his minister, Pilame, led to a series of disorders. Pilame was executed in 1812. The second adigar Eheylapola took his place; but he also excited the suspicion of the king; he fled away but the members of his family were cruelly put to death[3].

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1. For a description of this scene of murder by a survivor see Tennet: Ceylon. Vol. I. Chapter 3.
2. Quoted in Thornton's Gazetteer, I, 305. National Archives of Ceylon.
3. For a contemporary account of the way in which members of Eheylapola's family were killed, see Asiatic Journal, Feb., 1816. pp.156-160. The Cambridge History reproduces the description of Dr. Davy (v,p.407-8).

Some of the measures taken by Vikrama Sinha during this period seem to have been inspired by the motive of crushing those people who were 'tainted with the leaven of rebellion' against Kandy and were pro-foreign in their outlook. The decree that all priests were to leave the country by a certain date and that women who were not natives of the provinces would not be allowed to remain there, seems to be an attempt to resist the increasing pressure of foreign elements in the country; but it led to baneful consequences, inasmuch as it involved the separation of wives and husbands, mothers and children, producing scenes of utmost misery, and violence, shaking the foundations of the firmest loyalty[1]. The king's excesses and violence, based on his suspicion of rebellious intention in every mind, drove him to murderous acts of cruelty. All this time the English were waiting for their opportunity. The reign of terror alienated the people who, in order to drive the king from the throne, implored the assistance of the British government[2]. The government of Colombo issued a proclamation of war on 10 January, 1815, against the tyrannical power of Kandy, "which had provoked, by aggressive outrages and indignities, the just resentment of the British nation, which had...deluged the land with the blood of its subjects, and, by the violation of every religious and moral law, had become an object of abhorrence to mankind"[3].

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1. Knighton: op. cit. p.321.
2. Hamilton's Gazetteer, I, p.349. National Archives of Ceylon.
3. Knighton: op. cit. p.323.

A series of desultory wars followed; the resistance from a military point of view was trifling; the king fled from his capital, his minister Molligodde surrendered to the British on 8 February, 1815. On the 14th, the head-quarters of General Brownrigg were established in Kandy, and with the capture of the king on 18 February, 1815, the independence of Ceylon dating back to thousands of years came to an end[1]. The race of the deposed king was for ever excluded from the throne[2]. Vikrama Raja was sent as a captive to Vellore where he died in 1832.

The political climate of Ceylon seemed to have improved, peace appeared to have been established, and everything progressed satisfactorily. But it was a lull before the storm. The intrepid Ceylonese who had fought many a bloody battle against the Chinese, Moors, the Portuguese, and the Dutch could not resign themselves so easily into the hands of the British without a desperate bid for independence. The convention held on 2 March, 1815 between the English and the chief officers of the Kandyan empire, the adigars and dissaves, had deposed the king and had debarred his family and relations from the throne. It vested the sovereignty in the British crown, to be exercised through the Governor of Ceylon. The rights and privileges of the chiefs and headmen were guaranteed. The Buddhist religion was declared inviolable and its rites, ministers, and places of worship were to be maintained and

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1. Ibid. p.326.
2. Thornton: History, iv. p.349.

protected. But all this, obviously, did not satisfy the chieftains. It was certainly a great disappointment to Ehelopola, the chief who had been most prominent in the intrigues with Brown rigg - (his family had suffered brutally in the process) - that he was not made king, nor was any attempt made to set up a Sinhalese as king. The chiefs soon found themselves far less powerful, and the Bhikkhus were not at all satisfied with the loss of their influence which the British rule entailed; they were, in all probability, nervous of Christian proselytism[1]. The British system of administration, with its heavy taxation and conscription of personal services, no doubt embittered the people; but certainly it was no more bitter than the colonial rule of the Portuguese and the Dutch. It was the natural desire of the people, so repeatedly exhibited in their history, to terminate all traces of foreign administration in their country that caused the outbreak of 1817. The chiefs of Ceylon under British rule must have been smarting under a sense of humiliation, and in fact, the rebellion was excited by these discontended chiefs, and it was kept alive by their covert influence over the people, for 'no charge or accusation was ever brought against the administration of the British government'[2].

In September, 1817, a Buddhist priest having cast off his religious pretensions took the secular role

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1. For a detailed analysis of these events, refer to S.A. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 4.
2. Hamilton: op. cit. p.349.

of a king. The pretender with two old and six young priests and with numerous other supporters started a commotion. When intelligence was received of this insurrection exhibiting itself in Uva., a hilly district in the south-eastern part of the Island, the government sent a party of troops to suppress the movement, but it met with a disastrous end. This was the signal for the outburst of all anti-English forces. Kapittipolla, a brother-in-law of the ex-minister Eheylapola, and a chief of great influence in Ceylon, took up the cause of the pretender. His example was followed by other influential chiefs who, with their followers, habituated to the most implicit obedience to their masters, joined the tumult. The flame of revolt thus excited quickly spread from place to place, and in the end turned out to be a mass upsurge. Within six months of the outbreak, very few districts maintained their allegiance to the British rule, and all prospects of bringing the insurrection under control seem to have disappeared.[1] Martial law was proclaimed on 2 March 1818, but the British army fatigued and tired by the afflictions of disease and climate, while fighting desperately against the insurgents persisting in their rebellion, under the protection of their wilds and fastnesses, was brought to the brink of destruction. It was the most critical period for the English in Ceylon; the communication between Colombo and Kandy was threatened

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1. For contemporary accounts of the Kandian war, see Gentleman's Magazine, August 1818, p.171.

to be cut off, and it was even apprehended that the British would be 'soon obliged to evacuate the country and fight their way out of it'[1]. And so great was the terror that even the sick in the British army hospital, kept their arms beside them, constantly loaded[2].

But fortunately for the British, dissensions and mutual jealousies weakened the case of the rebels. The pretender was seized by an opposing party, and general Kapittipolla was also defeated in many engagements. Once the British had got into their stride, they inflicted terrible cruelties on the refractory populace. As Knighton says:

> " A district was declared rebellious. Detachments were sent to scour the country, to butcher all whom they found with arms in their hands, to destroy and lay waste every thing that came in their way. Dwellings were burned, fruit-trees and plantations were cut down... Judged by the nature of the reprisals, it appears that the whole country rose enmasse against the foreigners which involved the government in an immense expenditure of blood and treasure. It was estimated that nearly a fifth part of their forces perished in the campaign. The fiery Kandyans fought every inch of the ground before surrendering, and resorted to every species of attack which theycould devise, and left no effort untried to bring about the destruction of their foes. Pits were dug with concealed spikes in their road; snares of all kinds, and ambuscades in every practicable place were planted to harass their enemies, and neither mercy nor quarter was given on either side" 2.

In this war of extermination, the rebels in the long run could not maintain the contest and began to be

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1. Knighton: Ceylon. p.330.
2. Ibid. p.331.

captured in parties. In the beginning of 1819, large bodies of troops were sent from Calcutta and Madras to Ceylon.[1] Ultimately, however, when the news was broadcast that the British government had captured the Sacred Tooth, All resistance came to an end, as the people had a blind faith in the age-old tradition of Ceylon that whoever would obtain that Tooth would be the ruler of the country. Of the three leaders of the insurrection, Kapittipolla and Madugalle were tried and beheaded, and theson of Pilame Talawe was banished to Mauritius. Eheylapola and other chiefs were also sent to that place and many others were banished in the Liverpool frigate[2]. The Buddhist priest (the Pretender) was arrested in 1829, he was tried and condemned to death but received a pardon from the Crown[3].

A Ceylonese scholar, Dr. T.Vimalananda discovered at the Public Records Office, London, private and official correspondence dealing with the rebellion of 1818[4]. This was published in the Times of Ceylon in February 1963. Apart from the new light the series of dispatches throws on the rebellion, it is interesting also to note the attitude of the British towards the Kandyans and the people of Ceylon in general, not to mention the gravity of the situation and the anxiety of the British in the face of the struggle about which Sir Robert Brownrigg wrote to Lord North :

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1. Gentleman's Magazine, January, 1819. p.70.
2. Ibid. Supplement to Vol. LXXXIX, Pt.II. p.630.
3. Mill: viii, 70. Copious intelligence respecting the Insurrection of Ceylon in minute detail is recorded in theAsiatic Journal, 1818 (June-July).
4. Sunday Times of Ceylon, February 24, 1963. p.7.

> " ... I feel it will be impossible to meet the efforts of the whole Kandyan population in different quarters and to bring back to order the provinces now in revolt or which may become so....under dire necessity requesting the prompt aid of your honourable board..." (Feb.1818).

And on hearing that the further reinforcements from India were on their way he wrote:

> " ... Much however as I lament the consequences of the loss of time which must elapse before the force can be brought into action, still I feel greatly relieved from the anxiety I have for so many months laboured under, as to the ultimate result of the conflict I am engaged in, from the knowledge of its approach and that the object is considered by the Governor General (India) as it really is, ultimately connected with the general reputation and prosperity of the British in India, I contemplate with sanguine hope..." (July, 1818). (1).

Dr. T.Vimalananda also brought out the importance which the British Government attached to Ceylon in the context of their Empire in India. His research work gives more than an inkling of the strength of the untrained rebel force that was successful in sending an organised trained and armed European force into such a helpless state. The importance of Ceylon to Britain is evident from the words of Brownrigg in his letter of January 1818:

> " ... I would ill-fulfil my duty to my sovereign, was I to consent to abandon a part of his dominions which I contemplate as not only increasing the value of his ancient possessions in the island by their accession but as containing in themselves a country which under a beneficial Government will prove an acquisition of considerable importance to Great Britain..." (2)

Considering the length and breadth of the British Empire

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(1) Ibid. p.7.
(2) Ibid. p.7.

at the time, this indeed was a significant estimate. We may surmise that Brownrigg had very carefully analysed and understood the strategic value of Ceylon and its importance for the British empire in India.

It is interesting to note Brownrigg's admission of helplessness in war, without the aid of the local population, in his letter to the Right Hon. the Earl of Bathhurst in 1817:

> " ... To surprise them (rebel force) in their retreats or drive them out of their interminable forests requires the aid of their countrymen used to the climate and as well acquainted with the secret haunts as themselves. A long experience in former wars shows how impossible it is for any European alone to subdue even part of their country..."(1)

It may also be mentioned that the people from other parts of South-East Asia played a significant role in this story.

It is clearly established that the Malayas played a very important part in giving the British the aid which they most needed. Writes Brownrigg in February 1818:

> "... The Muslim inhabitants whose interests as traders and greater knowledge of our system of Government render them more sensible of its benefits continue to be faithful and actively useful in conveying supplies from the seacoast to the neighbourhood of Badulla..." (2)

In May 1818, Deputy General L.De Bussche had the pleasure of announcing to England:

> " The Commander of the forces has always the greatest satisfaction in having it in his power to hold upto admiration any remarkable instance of bravery and zeal displayed by the troops...distinguished proof of these qualities

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(1) Ibid. p.7.
(2) Ibid. p.8.

> together with most gratifying demonstration of fidelity and attachment to His Majesty's service as evinced by a detachment of the first Ceylon Regiment...Major Huskissen ordered a part of 29 men (Malays) under the command of native Lieutenant Annam of the 1st. Ceylon Regiment to march towards a body of rebels...with secret orders to act as if it was their intention to desert". (1)

Finally Dr. Vimalananda's work refers to the main causes of the defeat of the rebels by the British forces. The fundamental cause of the defeat of the rebels was, however, the disunity among the chiefs. "...They are broken into parties" wrote Brownrigg in 1817 "...which will never unite to resist a Government of any energy or strength..." And again

> " Ehelapola has voluntarily confirmed by oath his unshaken fidelity to the BritishGovernment. He will never consent to render homage to a Malabar King or be instrumental in raising one to the throne...Ehalapola may be considered as the 1st. in power and most aspiring in ambition...nor would I rely upon his loyalty from any gratitude to the British Government which restored him to his country and reinstated him in honours and wealth, yet there does not appear any probable ground for his deserting our cause for the sake of a branch of the same Malabar family which had barbarously murdered his wife and children and reduced him to beggary and exile as already observed..." (2)

Brownrigg also wrote:

> " ...the first Adigar who is next to him is his decided enemy...and nothing but very extra-ordinary necessity could ever bring them to act together with any cordial cooperation..."(3)

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(1) Ibid. p.8.
(2) Ibid. p.7.
(3) Ibid. p.8.

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THE COLEBROOKE REFORMS

In short it may be stated that after the Dutch maritine settlements in Ceylon were surrendered to the British in 1796, they were administered by the East India Company as part of the Madras Residency until 1802, when, as we have already mentioned, Britain got possession of the Island under the terms of the Peace of Amiens, and made it a Crown colony. Under the Constitution then introduced, the Governor was answerable only to the Secretary of State and, through him, to the British Parliament; he, however, enjoyed extensive powers - administrative, legislative and judicial[1]. After the cession of the Kandyan Provinces and their subsequent revolt and settlement, they were administered separately through officials appointed by, and responsible only to, the Governor. At the end of 1818 the government issued a proclamation which threw all the blame for the rebellion on the chiefs and took away many of their powers[2]. Although they kept some of their former administrative functions, they were in future to be strictly controlled by the British authorities. They lost the power of charging fees, and of making minor appointments, and were to be paid salaries instead of collecting the revenue themselves and recouping themselves from it[3].

1. Forbes: Eleven Years in Ceylon. (1900). p.71.
2. Holden: Ceylon. Chapter 2.
3. Jeffries, Charles Sir: The Path to Independence. Chap.1.

A new system of taxation based on taking a proportion of the produce and certain judicial reforms, deprived them of both power and influence. The view taken by the British Government, then and since, has been that the Kandyan convention of 1815 was abrogated by the rebellion and that the proclamation of 1818 took its place[1]. In particular the Buddhists, both bhikkhus and laymen, have always felt that the religious clauses of the convention have been studiously ignored or, at least, neglected. Their feeling has had important repercussions in very recent times[2].

After the rebellion of 1818 the British Government built up numerous forts in the Island; means of transport were developed and a net-work of roads was made[3]. The up-country jungle was cleared for the plantation of coffee. This was the beginning of the economic exploitation of Ceylon. Its indirect result, of course, was the economic development of the Island which we will survey in Chapter 5. In 1823 a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate the administration of the Island. In their terms of reference were included; *inter alia*, an enquiry into the powers exercised by the Governor, the effectiveness of the Council and the condition of revenue and expenditure[4]. The main burden

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1. Pakeman: op. cit. pp.54-55.
2. In 1956, an unofficial Committee of prominent Buddhist laymen was formed to enquire into the state of Buddhism in Ceylon. It produced a report: The Betrayal of Buddhism. It bitterly attacked the British Government for its favouring of Christians and its neglect of Buddhism, against the undertaking given in the Kandy Convention of 1815.
3. Ibid. p.55.
4. Mendis: op. cit. Chapter 7.

of the investigation fell on the shoulders of Lieutenant-Colonel W.M.G.Colebrooke, who proved indefatigable in visiting all parts of the Island and collecting a great quantity of valuable information. He had very definite views on matters of principle, based consciously or unconsciously, on the teachings of Adam Smith and Jeremy Bentham. The obligation on the inhabitants to perform customary service (rajakariya) seemed to him objectionable because it tended to stereotype methods of cultivation and to prevent mobility of labour; and the Government monopolies, particularly in cinnamon, hindered the proper growth of private enterprise in trade[1]. For these reasons he did not hesitate to recommend the abolition of customary service and monopolies. He found that the Governor's powers were practically unlimited, a state of affairs he strongly condemned. Nor could he approve of the differences in the administration of the Maritime and Kandyan Provinces.

Colebrooke's principles, fully applied, would have resulted in a strictly constitutional Governor obliged to consult his executive officers, and a legislature based on some form of representation. He pressed them so far as the circumstances of the time allowed. The unification of the administration throughout the Island was to put an end to the special powers exercised by the Governor in the Kandyan Provinces, and a

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1. Ibid. p.76.

Council of seven was to share executive responsibility with the Governor[1]. The creation of a Legislature presented a serious problem in a country where, as he recognised, "the people are unprepared for popular institutions"[2]. Accordingly, he recommended the formation of a Legislative Council which would, he thought, form an essential part of any Legislature for which the Island might be fitted at some future date.

By an Order-in-Council of 28th September, 1833, the recommendations made by Colebrooke were in the main enforced[3]. For the first time Ceylon was brought under a unified system of administration. This unified administration of government was in the hands of a Governor, an Executive Council to help him in executive matters and a Legislative Council to advise him in making laws. The Governor was still the person responsible to the British Government for the administration of Ceylon. The Executive Council was to assist him and the Legislative Council was purely advisory[4]. That is to say, none of these bodies could compel the Governor to do anything he

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1. Jennings, Sir Ivor: Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon. Chap. 2.
2. Jennings, Sir Ivor: The Constitution of Ceylon. Chap.1.
3. The Colebrooke-Cameron reports (Cameron was Colebrooke's legal colleague) were presented in 1832. Four reports were presented by Colebrooke on the administration of the Government, on Revenue, on Compulsory services and on Establishments, and one report was submitted by Cameron, on the Judicial establishment. An excellent account of these documents is found in G.C.Mendis: Colebrooke-Cameron Papers-1956.
4. Mendis: Colebrooke-Cameron Papers. p.36.

did not want to do. The Executive Council consisted of the chief government officials. The Legislative Council consisted of ten officials and six non-officials, all of whom were nominated. Of the non-officials three were Europeans, one Sinhalese, one Tamil and one Burgher.

The fundamental principles of the Constitution of 1833 survived until 1910[1]. The developments during the period 1900-1947 are most important from the point of view of this work. In this chapter, however, we examine them in brief. They form part of the rest of this thesis and will be covered in detail in the following chapters. During this period, some advance in the democratic direction was made, although it was very slow[2]. The change took place in two ways. One way was by placing the control of more aspects of the government of Ceylon in the hands of the body which could pass laws - till 1931 this body was called the Legislative Council; and the other was by placing the control of the Legislative Council more and more in the hands of the people[3]. Between the years 1833 and 1910, a good many aspects of the government of Ceylon were placed in the hands of the Legislative Council. Gradually the power to pass laws on most matters of government and the power to give or withhold money in regard to the operation of these laws came into the hands of the Legislative Council. At the beginning of the 20th century, therefore, the Ceylon Legislative Council had a great deal

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1. "Ceylon: Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform", September 1945. London.
2. Pakeman: op. cit. Chapter 5.
3. Weerawardana: Ceylon and her Citizens. Chapter VI.

of power, subject only to the overriding authority of the Governor and the British Government[1].

The Legislative Council, however, was still controlled by the officials, who constituted a majority in it, although the policy of associating the people of the country in its work was begun as early as 1833 by nominating three Ceylonese. This was a beginning, though hardly important enough from the point of view of democratic advance. Yet from 1910 onwards the important thing about constitutional changes in Ceylon was the way in which the Legislative Council came by gradual stages under the control of the people[2]. Firstly, more non-officials came to be appointed to the Legislative Council. By this means the influence of persons who were not government officials was increased. Secondly, more and more of the non-officials were chosen from among the Ceylonese, although at first many non-official members of the Legislative Council were European planters and commercial men[3]. Thirdly, more and more of the Ceylonese non-officials came to be elected by the people of Ceylon[4].

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1. Namasivayam, S: Legislatures of Ceylon. p.31.
2. Ibid. p.65.
3. Namasivayam, S: Parliamentary Government in Ceylon. Chapter 2.
4. Soulbury Report: para 24. It was not until 1889 that the number of Unofficial Members of the Legislative Council was increased to eight by the addition of two to represent the Kandyans and the Muslims. They were now eight in all - a Tamil, a Low Country Sinhalese, a Kandyan Sinhalese, a Muslim, a Burgher and three Europeans. The official majority was reduced to one. But two new and powerful factors were now beginning to operate. As the century wore on, the whole conception of the function of government was changing and there

The agitation for the further reform of the constitution was greatly stimulated by events during the First World War. The Morley-Minto reforms in British India had imparted a tremendous stimulus to the constitutional agitation in Ceylon, just as later on the Montagu-Chelmsford discussions had their impact on the national movement in Ceylon[1]. The first election of a representative of the educated Ceylonese was fought purely on caste lines, a high caste Tamil being chosen with the aid of the high caste Sinhalese vote, caste prejudice being thus proved more pronounced than racial bias. A state of growing unrest developed, and this was increased by the outbreak of the War. A religious fracas at Gampola in 1915 between the Buddhists and Muslims resulted in serious riots which were quelled only after the

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was a growing presumption in favour of a more active intervention in economic development and social reform. The emergence of an educated Ceylonese Middle Class which demanded a share in the government of the country had also to be reckoned with. The Sinhalese and Tamils put forward claims for the introduction of territorial representation by election to the Legislative Council. Eventually, by Royal Instructions dated 24th November, 1910, a new departure was made. In a Council of eleven Official and ten Unofficial Members, four of the latter were to be elected - two Europeans, one Burgher and one other Ceylonese. The electoral rolls were based on the literacy test. The other six Unofficials were to be nominated, viz., two Low Country Sinhalese, two Tamils, one Kandyan Sinhalese and one Muslim. It will be noticed that the Official majority was still maintained. The new Legislative Council met for the first time on 16th January, 1912. The principle of election had bee[n] admitted and, as it happened, there was a departure from communal representation, for the educated Ceylonese electorate returned a Tamil.

1. Encyclopedia Britannica. p.180. Column 2. Also refer to para 25 of the Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform op. cit.

imposition of martial law[1]. The political problems in Ceylon were rendered particularly difficult of solution because of the very heterogeneous population. The Low Country Sinhalese more sophisticated than the Kandyans, were spread throughout the Kandyan provinces and as they claimed a share in the management of Kandyan temporalities. The Kandyans, on the other hand, viewing the penetration of their country by Low Country Sinhalese with dislike, remembered that these folk had aided the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British in their several attacks on the Kandyan kingdom. Therefore they regarded any system of government that placed the supreme power in the hands of a majority with acute apprehension[2]. These feelings were in some degree shared by the Ceylonese Tamils, though their case was slightly different in as much as they had been the invaders of the country occupied by the Low Country Sinhalese. The Burghers were still more apprehensive; while the Europeans who represented huge financial interests, alike in the world of commerce and in agricultural enterprise, were only 0.18 per cent of the total population of the Island.

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1. Jennings, Sir W.I.: The Approach to the Self-government, p.35. He writes "There were conflicts between Sinhalese and Muslims in 1915, though they were economic as well as religious; but generally the communalism of Ceylon, though pronounced, was unaggressive. What is more, the political leaders, though conscious of their communal origin and dependent on the votes of communally conscious electors, managed to develop the larger patriotism which transcended communalism". This he writes in 1962 after the worst communal conflict which took place in 1958.
2. This is akin to the Muslim distrust of majority rule in India before the Partition.

§ 13

THE DONOUGHMORE ERA

It is in this background that we can understand the political developments in Ceylon from 1917 to 1947. In 1917, the Ceylon Reform League, and the Ceylon National Association (we will discuss these bodies in detail in another chapter) sent a memorial to the Secretary of State in which they asked that the Legislative Council should have a majority of unofficials mainly returned by territorial constituencies. In 1919, the Low Country Sinhalese and Tamils formed the Ceylon National Congress from which the latter withdrew in 1921 because, afraid of being swamped, they insisted that any change in the constitution should make provision for communal electorates. The virus of communalism which had already affected India's public life was now having its effect on Ceylon. The Low Country Sinhalese now asked for a Legislative Council of about 50, 4/5ths of whom were to be elected territorially on a broad male, and more limited female, franchise. The other 1/5th was to consist of nominated officials and unofficials, the latter to be selected to represent important minorities. In 1920, an Order-in-Council broadened the basis of the Legislative Council. It was now to contain 14 officials and 23 unofficial members. By another change in 1924 that body comprised 36 unofficial members (3 of whom were Europeans, the majority of them being elected) and 12 official. At the same time three unofficial Ceylonese

(two Sinhalese and one Tamil) and one European had been added to the Executive Council. Thus while constitutional development on modern lines began in 1910, representative government did not begin until 1924, when only 4 per cent of the adult population had the franchise and there were communal electorates [1]. Responsibility for the good administration of the Island continued to be vested solely in the Governor who was unable to discharge it save by the good will of the unofficial majority in the Legislative Council or by the exercise of his power of veto, which could easily be countered by a refusal to vote supply [2]. Because of the resulting impasse, the working of the constitution was investigated during 1927-28 by the Donoughmore Commission, and as an outcome of that body's recommendations a new constitution came into force in 1931. It was accepted by the unofficial members of the Legislative Council by a majority of two only. Both the Legislative and Executive Councils were dissolved, and their place was taken by a State Council having legislative and also executive functions. The new council consisted of three official members, 50 elected members and not more than 8 members nominated by the Governor. The three official members exofficio were the Chief Secretary, the Legal Secretary and the Financial Secretary (formerly known, respectively, as Colonial Secretary, AttorneyGeneral and Treasurer) while they could take part in debates, they

1. Jennings: The Commonwealth in Asia. p.70.
2. Namasivayam: Parliamentary Government in Ceylon. Chapter I.

could not vote, and thus there was no longer an official minority. All elected members were elected on a territorial basis (the franchise being very wide), communal representation having been abolished. The Island was divided into 50 territorial constituencies, approximately equal in size. The members of the new council proceeded by secret ballot to divide their total number (excluding the three officials, known as Officers of State) into seven executive committees to administer seven of the ten groups into which the government departments were divided; each of the remaining three groups was supervised by an Officer of State[1]. Each executive committee elected a Chairman, and these seven chairmen, termed Ministers, and the three Officers of State constituted a Board of Ministers; the three officials, who had no vote, served in an advisory capacity. The most important function of the Board was the preparation of the annual estimates of revenue and expenditure[2]. Under the new Constitution the elections took place in 1931 the first election with universal suffrage in the colonial Empire. There was a certain amount of intimidation, and some bribery[3]. The Tamils for more than one reason, decided to boycott the election, so that four seats which they would normally have occupied (and subsequently did) remained unfilled. There were 28 low-country and 10 Kandyan Sinhalese elected,

1. Jennings, Sir Ivor: The Constitution of Ceylon. Chapter 2.
2. Keesings Archieves. p.5810 June 5-12, 1943.
3. Rose, S: Politics in Southern Asia. Chapter 4.

2 Europeans (one an ex-civil servant the other, an up-country planter), 3 Ceylon Tamils, 2 Indian Tamils and one Muslim; 4 Europeans, 2 Burghers, 1 Indian Tamil and 1 Muslim were nominated. The members sorted themselves out into Executive Committees, and a Ceylon Tamil and an Indian were among the seven chairmen elected, so that the Board of Ministers included members of these communities.

The outstanding fact that soon became manifest, arising from these events, was that Ceylonese leaders of all communities had now in their minds the intention to strive after full internal self-government, as early as possible[1]. They had not got as far as the idea of full independence, and they were prepared for self-government to proceed by degrees, provided it was not too long in coming. What they did dislike was having a constitution thrust upon them not in line with what they had demanded. They did not like the limitations which would be put on Ministers by the Executive Committee system. They decided to make the best of it, but also to do what they could to get it altered at the earliest opportunity. As far as the attitude of London is concerned, the Soulbury Report put it thus:

> " The attitude of the British Government was that the new scheme must be given a fair trial. As it was laid down in the 1931 Royal Instructions to the Governor, the aim was 'the devolution upon the inhabitants of Ceylon of responsibility for the management of the internal affairs of the island'. The Colonial Office still felt uncomfortably responsible for the welfare and interests of the minorities, and could not see a parliamentary system working adequately without the existence of organised political

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1. Jennings, Sir Ivor: The British Commonwealth of Nations. p.154.

> parties - though they could have observed this working very near their own shores, in the Isle of Man and in Jersey" (1).

They still had a general feeling of responsibility for the good of colonial peoples - though, as Sir Charles Jeffries asks pertinently 'responsible to Whom?'[2.] The answer would seem to be that they were impelled by a sense of duty, sometimes amounting to a sense of mission - a faint echo, perhaps, of 'the white man's burden' of Kipling. "The old parallel of mother and children may today be considered as played out, and ridiculed, but the feeling had a resemblance to the duty which most parents feel towards their children, natural affection apart, or that felt by a housemaster at a boarding school to the boys in his house. It was felt in varying degrees by resident Europeans, most of all, perhaps, by educationalists and the more dedicated of the civil service; least by the business community, though with some of them it was not altogether absent; there was always a feeling that certain actions by any of its members 'letting the side down' were strongly to be reprobated"[3].

During the first five years after 1931 the experiment of the Donoughmore Constitution was being worked out. The leaders of the Ceylonese, though they did their best to work it, and in no way attempted to sabotage it, tried from the very beginning to get it altered. It was

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1. The Soulbury Report. Chapter III.
2. Ceylon: The Path to Independence. Chapter 7.
3. Ibid. p.120.

only a firm stand on the part of the Colonial Office that made the Legislative Council agreed to work it - Sidney Webb, the famous Fabian Socialist, who had become Lord Passfield, Secretary of State for the Colonies, was adamant against any change in the Order-in-Council which established it. The very next year, E.W.Perera, who had been prominent for years in the movement for political advance, moved a resolution in the State Council concerning the constitution on seven counts, six of which were accepted by the Council and formed the basis of a memorandum submitted by the Board of Ministers to the Colonial Secretary; but it was of no avail. The Secretary of State wanted to see how the experiment worked.

The State Council's first act was to elect its Speaker and Mr. A.F.Molamure was chosen[1]. He was a good Speaker, but though some unfortunate events was compelled to resign after a few years, and was succeeded by a Tamil, Sir Vitialingam Duraiswamy. The procedure was similar to that of the former Legislative Council, and basically to that of the British House of Commons, except as far as finance was concerned - the financial procedure of the House of Commons is unique. The practice which grew up in regard to the annual financial debate on the Estimates was for every item to be gone through in Committee. This was carried into the Parliament of Ceylon, and is a rather unfortunate heritage, as much time is wasted over minor matters[2].

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1. Soulbury Report, Chapter III.
2. Namasivayam,S: Legislatures of Ceylon. p.171.

The unsatisfactory features of the constitution soon became apparent. The first was that the reference of so many administrative matters to the Executive Committees made for unconscionable delays. The Committees varied in unity and efficiency. The Agriculture and Lands Committee, for example, was extremely well and harmoniously managed by its Chairman, D.S.Senanayake; in it there was little dissension or tension with the permanent heads of departments[1]. But the Minister was very much of a dedicated person, who realised the importance of the work that lay before him and his Committee and, being forceful and knowing how to handle people, was able to get on with his Committee - and with his work. The same could not be said, however, of all the Committees several of which wasted much time in endless discussions often of trivial matters, which their Chairmen, the Ministers, were unable or unwilling to check. On the whole the Committees had much better relations with the permanent officials than the former Finance Committee. The Chief Secretary or, when financial matters were under discussion the Finance Secretary, had the right to attend Executive Committee meetings. They did not often exercise that right, and when they did were usually able to make it clear that they were present in an advisory capacity, and not to wave the big stick.[2]

The second disadvantage was that the Board of

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1. Ibid. pp. 172-173.
2. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.113.

Ministers never quite knew where they were or how they stood. The tendency was towards collective responsibility, but it could not become a real thing, because any Minister might be obliged to put forward something - a policy or some administrative action - with which he was in total disagreement himself, but which had been forced upon him by the Executive Committee; and neither he nor his colleagues on the Board had the power to turn it down[1].

But the Board of Ministers - that is, the seven elected ones - though far from being homogenous in character, had one policy on which they were all agreed, to survive for complete self-government in internal affairs. They were genuinely anxious to improve the living conditions of the people, and to make a beginning in the direction of the positive state[2]. They also wanted the administration to be run to an increasing extent by the Ceylonese. The University College was now turning out honours graduates who were only too anxious to enter the higher ranks of government service, the Civil Service in particular; and the Colonial Office gradually gave way in the matter of the proportion of European officers to be recruited[3]. In March 1933, it was agreed that no non-Ceylonese should be appointed to any post in the government service unless there was no Ceylonese capable of filling it. This is what came to be known as the 'March Resolution' of

1. Ibid. p.114.
2. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 9.
3. Collins, Sir Charles: Public Administration in Ceylon. Chapter 4.

the State Council. There were many technical posts for which there were no Ceylonese qualified; but this did not apply to the Civil Service; the last Europeans to be appointed to this were recruited in 1937[1].

In 1936 the term of the first State Council came to an end. There were still no regular political parties contesting the elections[2]. But there was a small beginning, with A.E. Goonesinghe's Labour Party. There were, however, several middle class young men from the University College who had gone on to study at English universities, and one of them to America; there they were attracted by the doctrines of Marxism[3]. Two of them, Dr. N.M.Perera and Philip Gunawardhana, had worked up the constituencies for which they were candidates, and been elected. They provided an altogether new element among the legislators of Ceylon[4]. On their return from abroad they founded a party which they called the Lanka Sama Samaj Party and, though its organisation was not ready in time for the 1936 elections, it was able to present a programme and to put forward candidates for the next election - but that election did not take place for another eleven years.

The 1936 election was very similar to that of 1931. Mostly the same types of upper and middle class Ceylonese stood and were elected, with the exception of

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1. Ibid. p.49.
2. Jennings, Sir Ivor: The British Commonwealth of Nations. p.154.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. p.135.
4. Namasivayam: Legislatures of Ceylon. Chapter 2.

those just mentioned and one or two others who held rather more extreme views than the majority. However, when it came to the selection of Executive Committees, and the election of their Chairman, a formula was devised by which all seven Chairmen were Sinhalese[1]. This was worked out by the Professor of Mathematics at the University College, strangely enough himself a Tamil, who subsequently became a Minister and ultimately an extreme communalist[2]. The object of this manoeuvre has been variously explained, but though it does not appear to have been done for strictly communal reasons, it was generally taken to have been a communal move, especially by the Tamil community. One explanation is that it was intended to show the British Government that the Executive Committee system did not necessarily mean that it afforded protection to the minorities by accommodating one or two of them as Ministers, thus knocking the bottom out of one of the arguments for maintaining the Donoughmore Constitution[3].

The new State Council was elected on March 10, 1936; by March 19 the Board of Ministers had been constituted. All the seven ministers were Sinhalese and all representatives of the minorities were excluded. The Board fell more and more under the leadership - able, sometimes inspired, but nevertheless narrowly based - of D.S.Senanayake, his family and his associates (who were mostly, like him, members of

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1. Sir Ivor Jennings calls it a "Pan-Sinhalese Ministry". The Commonwealth In Asia. p.72.
2. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 9.
3. Weerawardana. op. cit. Chapter VI.

the Goigama caste)[1]. It is only fair to add that Senanayake was no communalist, and the vision of a united nation never left him. In the days of Peiris and Aruna Chalam it may well have seemed that there was in process of formation a governing elite, united by education, by the English language, and by Western political ideas, and undivided significantly by the frontiers of community and caste that ran through it. Indeed many observers of Ceylon's affairs before 1936 tended to underestimate the potential magnitude of communal tensions and to ignore caste as a potential factor because they knew only the Western oriented Ceylonese middle class of Colombo, in which ethnic origin seemed not to obtrude and caste not to matter. But both have always been more important than they seemed. As we noted in the first Chapter, it is significant that inter-community and inter-caste marriages were and are very few and far between[2]. Given, then, the underlying dis-unity of the elite and the majority position of the Goigama in the Sinhalese community at large, it is not surprising that the shift of power to the Goigama members of the elite should have taken place, especially with the advent of adult suffrage in 1931; or that given the family-centred nature of the Sinhalese society, D.S. Senanayake should have brought other members of his own family into politics with him. In any case, the Board of Ministers did not include any representative of the

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1. Jennings, Sir Ivor. op. cit. p.73.
2. We need not examine these arguments, in detail, here. For these details refer to para 57 and 58 of the report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform.op.cit.

Minorities[1] .

It was argued by the Sinhalese leaders that they had excluded the minorities because the latter were not willing to cooperate with the Sinhalese. Be that as it may, the minorities were seriously alarmed[2]. All the seven ministers now considered the possibility of wresting further constitutional concessions. They wanted to convert the Board of Ministers into a full-fledged cabinet, so that the powers of the Governor may be drastically curtailed. The Governor expressed the view that his powers were absolutely essential and that they would continue for many years. In fact he wanted a strengthening of these powers. He argued that an independant public service commission was impossible because suitable persons were not available to be its members. But he concluded that the Donoughmore Constitution was a failure and that a new Commission must be set up to devise a more satisfactory form of Government (March, 1937).

Since 1931 the constitution had revealed certain drawbacks, largely owing to the non-existence of a party system and to the fact that administration by the Executive Committees was not sufficiently speedy[3]. It is true that the seeds of a party system were now being sown. In the twenties it had been different and the Donoughmore Commissioners[4] were not wrong in thinking that there was

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1. Saul Rose. op. cit. Chapter 4.
2. Ibid. p.56.
3. Keesing's Archives, June 5-12, 1943. p.5810.
4. Earl of Donoughmore, Sir Mathew Nathan; Sir Geoffrey Butler, and Dr. Drummond Shiels.

virtually no party system in the Ceylon of 1927-28. The Ceylon National Congress, like its Indian counterpart, was a national movement, not a party. In the thirties, however, the inter-community tensions which had already been generated in India were coming up in Ceylon also and they were themselves to produce parties, at best on a communal basis. In the late 1920s men soon to be prominent as the leaders of the parties on the Left were learning their Marxism - Philip Gunawardena in the United States, N.M.Perera in London[1].

Before we pass on to consider the constitutional reform movement in Ceylon after 1937, we must explain that from the point of view of subsequent history the two most important recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission were <u>adult franchise</u> and <u>the abolition of communal representation</u>. They could see no merit in fixed communal seats, but they recognised the dilemma, and proposed a fair number of seats (twelve) without any definite communal allotment, which could be filled on the Governor's nomination by representatives of the smaller minority communities; the two larger ones would be looked after by the territorial seats[2]. This abolition was important, but still more important was the breath-taking expansion of the franchise. No one had advocated such a step in Ceylon - with one exception. This was A.E.Goonesinghe who in the twenties had founded the

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1. Saul Rose: op. cit. p.56.
2. Jennings: The British Commonwealth of Nations. Chap.11. pp.147 ff.

Ceylon Labour Party[1]. He used to hold rallies and drive round Colombo with a red flag flying from the bonnet of his car. He earned some popularity with the urban proletariat in Colombo; but his ideas got him nowhere with the middle class or, for that matter, with the rural workers. The National Congress was against any extensive broadening of the franchise. The Commission had suggested the minimum age limit of thirty for women, but the Legislative Council recommended the franchise for women to be exactly the same as for men, and this was accepted. This was somewhat surprising, as the position of women in Ceylon was still very much that of the inferior sex. The Secretary of State readily agreed. It has to be remembered that it was in that same year, 1928, that complete adult franchise was extended to women and men alike in the United Kingdom. The Labour M.P. Drummond Shiels was the most persistent in getting this through. This particular action did more than anything else to set Ceylon in the forefront of constitutional advance[2]; from this time onwards universal adult suffrage became an essential feature of British colonial policy, and it has been elevated into something like a sacred doctrine, or even a dogma, in the minds particularly of African nationalist politicians. In the light of this, the Donoughmore Commissioners' half-apologetic reasons for advocating this

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1. Holland, W.L.(Ed): Asian Nationalism And The West. Part Four. pp. 349 ff.
2. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.107.

extension make interesting reading.

The effects of universal suffrage did not make themselves really manifest on a large scale until the 1936 election. In the first general election in 1931, a little over half the potential electorate registered and voted; but considerable interest was taken by those who did - and there were nine murders whose cause was attributed to election disputes[1].

So far as the abolition of communal representation is concerned, it did not please the smaller minorities, as it seemed to them that with territorial representation dominance by the Sinhalese was inevitable[2]. But the Commissioners were firmly convinced that it should be terminated. They wrote:

> " Communal representation was devised with a view to assisting the development of democratic institutions in countries of different races and religions and in the hope of eliminating the clash of these various interests during elections. It was expected to provide peacefully an effective legislative assembly which would give a fair representation of the different elements in the population...Unfortunately the experiment has not given the desired results. The representatives of the various communities do not trust one another...The minority communities are fearful that any preponderance of governmental powers held by another community will inevitably be used against them".(3)

They thought that the members of various communities mixing together in Executive Committees would enable them

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1. Jennings: The Commonwealth In Asia. Chapter VI.
2. Namasivayam: Legislatures of Ceylon. p.78.
3. Report of the Special Commission on the Constitution, Cmd.3131 (Donoughmore Report) H.M.S.O.1928. pp.90-91.

to see and understand a great number of interests they had in common, as compared with those on which there were communal differences.

The constituencies were duly delimited and the registers compiled. This took a long time, and accounts partly for the time lag between the publication of the Donoughmore Report and the implementation of its recommendations. The report came in for heavy criticism by the Ceylonese [1]. The Sinhalese in particular had an uncomfortable feeling that the country was being made the subject of a doubtful experiment [2]. They wanted a development from the 1924 constitution in the direction of responsible government marching towards the "Westminster model". Naturally the knowledge that this would make them the all-powerful majority had its attraction [3]. But the matter that considerably disturbed them was the extension of the franchise to the Indian estate population - a perennial source of trouble from this time onwards. The decision taken finally was to base the franchise on 'domicile' - a somewhat vague term. This let in all Ceylonese over the age of twenty-one; there was in addition a literacy and property qualification which let in the Europeans and the Indian merchants; and for the other Indians, estate labourers in particular, there was the alternative of a 'Certificate of Permanent Settlement',

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1. Mills, L.A.: Ceylon under British Rule. Chapter 7.
2. Ludowyk, E.F.C.: Story of Ceylon. Chapter 3.
3. Mills, L.A. op. cit. p.79.

of which very few took advantage; or of domicile depending on five years' residence, of which many did take advantage, sometimes in a not altogether regular way [1].

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THE PROBLEM OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM 1937-1944.

As we stated above, the Donoughmore Constitution had not entirely satisfied the Sinhalese or the Tamils; an attempt continued to be made to bring about the necessary changes in the political sy tem of the Island. In November 1937, the discussion of constitutional reforms entered a new phase when the Secretary of State, Ormsby Gore, addressed an important despatch to the new Governor, Andrew Caldecott. This document listed the main issues: the relations between the Ministers, the Executive Committees and the State Council, the Representation of the Minority communities, and the franchise. The Secretary of State made it quite clear that the time was not yet ripe for any relaxation of the Governor's powers; although he considered that these powers needed to be clearly defined. On June 13, 1938, the Governor, after considering these questions, sent his recommendations to the Secretary of State. These were presented to Parliament in December, 1938 [2]. Andrew Caldecott's Reforms Despatch was a unique

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1. Jeffries. op. cit. p.72.
2. Correspondence relating to the Constitution of Ceylon. Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty. December,1938 (Cmd.5910). The "Reforms Despatch" is also printed as Ceylon Sessional Paper XXVIII of 1938.

document inasmuches it was based on an independent sifting of the evidence, and the conclusions had been provocatively stated. Caldécott had agreed with the Secretary of State that the Governor's powers could not be relaxed. But he made it clear that in future a bi-cameral legislature would be useful and essential for Ceylon. On the question of representation the Governor recommended that elected seats should continue to be filled on a territorial franchise. He also suggested that the electoral areas might be re-drawn so that the minorities might have a reasonable chance of representation. For this purpose, ten additional seats would be necessary. The fifty-fifty demand[1] was rejected; any scheme which in fact involved fractional representation on a racial basis was deemed undesirable. An exception, however, was suggested for the European and Burgher communities. It was recommended that the Governor should nominate 4 Europeans and 2 Burghers to ensure the representation of these communities. The Governor rejected all proposals to restrict the franchise or to re-impose any literacy or property qualifications. He applied the same principle to the proposals to alter the regulations which governed the Indian franchise[2].

To the Governor the case against the Executive Committee system seemed overwhelming, because it delayed the administrative process, obstructed cordination and

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1. This formula was that half of the seats should be assigned to the Sinhalese, and half to the minorities. The Tamil Congress Leader, G.G.Ponnambalam was the prime mover in this.
2. Report of the Commission on Constitutional Reform. op. cit. Para 65.

prevented the formulation of any effective Ministerial policy[1]. The Governor, therefore, recommended its abolition. He made it clear that the Executive Committees did not provide any real safeguard for the minorities - the only argument which had been advanced in their favour. In short, the Governor recommended a system something like Cabinet Government on the Westminster model. He also suggested the appointment of Deputy Ministers[2]. The running theme of all these proposals was that self-government in internal affairs involved responsibility. Most of his suggestions were dictated by the requirements of a Cabinet system, and if these could not be fulfilled, nothing much could be done[3]. There were, of course, certain aspects which would still be subjected to criticism. The Sinhalese majority was bound to resent the proposed complete retention of the Governor's powers, the minorities would as much resent the unqualified denunciation of communalism and would regard the addition of only ten seats in the State Council as thoroughly inadequate to mitigate the predominance of the majority community[4]. The Reforms Despatch was, as expected, put to a minute scrutiny. The factor which prevented the acceptance of Caldecott's proposal was the refusal of the minorities to agree to the increased representation provided for them. Other features which did not commend themselves to the State Council were

1. Soulbury Report. para 66.
2. Ibid. para 67.
3. Namasivayam: Parliamentary Government in Ceylon. Chap.4.
4. Ibid. p.81.

the method suggested for securing minority representation in the Cabinet, the proposal that there should be Deputy Ministers, and the suggestion for the reorganisation of the Public Service Commission[1].

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 naturally held up further constitutional advance. The immediate question that arose was whether the life of the State Council should be extended and, if so, for how long ? There was growing unrest in Ceylon. The constitutional agitation had created a fairly difficult situation for the British Government in Ceylon. The Governor advised the Secretary of State that the general election should be postponed, and that in the meantime a Commission should be appointed to examine the problems of constitutional reforms in Ceylon. He also proposed that the postponement should be for a definite term and not for the duration of the war. On June 15, 1940, the elections were postponed for two years. As the war assumed more and more alarming proportions, the question of Ceylon became more and more important. On September 1, 1941, His Majesty's Government announced:

> " His Majesty's Government have had under further consideration the question of constitutional reform in Ceylon. The urgency and importance of reform of the Constitution are fully recognised by His Majesty's Government, but before taking

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 11.

> decisions upon the present proposals for reform, concerning which there has been so little unanimity but which are of such importance to the well-being of Ceylon. His Majesty's Government would desire that the position should be further examined and made the subject of further consultation by means of a Commission or Conference. The Board of Ministers will appreciate that this cannot be arranged under war conditions, but the matter will be taken up with the least possible delay after the war".(1).

This statement led to strong dissatisfaction in the Island[2]. It was sharply pointed out that the delay contemplated was for an indefinite period; the State Council also had become out of tune with public opinion[3]. It was widely felt that no new commission was necessary and that an enquiry of the type envisaged in the Royal Statement would only serve to create ill will among the various sections of the population. In December 1941, the war entered its Far Eastern phase. While during the "Phoney" War period, Ceylon was little affected[4], the entry of Japan in the war and her astonishing successes in 1942 completely changed the situation. With the fall of Burma, Malaya, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, Ceylon jumped into the

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1. Soulbury Report. para 78.
2. Ibid. para 79.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. p.90.
4. Even in June 1940, Churchill had begun to realize the importance of Ceylon in the Imperial Defence strategy. In his message to the Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Australia dated June 16, 1940, he wrote: "In this first phase of an Anglo-Japanese War, we should, of course, defend Singapore...we should also be able to base in Ceylon a battle-cruiser and a fast aircraft carrier...". p.350. The Second World War. R.S.London. Vol.II. Also see p.461. Vol.III.

front line with a bang[1]. Active military measures had to be taken. A weak division of the Indian Army was first sent to the Island; then the Australian Government was persuaded to allow an Australian Division on its way home for the defence of Australia to form part of the garrison until it could be relieved by the Indian army and an East African Division[2]. Royal Air Force Units were sent to the Island; the Ceylon Defence Force was now mobilized and doubled in strength. Headquarters known as 'The Ceylon Army Command' were xxxx set up in the Colombo Museum, and air-fields and air strips were hastily constructed in various parts of the Island. Vice-Admiral Sir Geoffrey Layton was appointed as the Commander-in-Chief in Ceylon with power even to supersede the Governor, if necessary. In practice, however,

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1. This is fully borne out by Admiral Raeder's report to Hitler on Feb. 13, 1942. He stated: "Rangoon, Singapore, and also Port Darwin, will be in the Japanese hands within a few weeks...Japan plans to protect this front in the Indian Ocean by capturing the key position of Ceylon and she also plans to gain naval forces. Fifteen Japanese submarines are, at the moment, operating in the Bay of Bengal, in the waters off Ceylon, and in the straits on both sides of Sumatra and Java...Once Japanese battle-ships, air-craft carriers, and the Japanese naval air force are based on Ceylon, Britain will be forced to resort to heavily escorted Convoys if she desires to maintain communications with India and the Near East". Ibid. Vol. IV. p.124.
2. In his letter to General Wavell on April 18, 1942, Churchill emphasised the vital importance of Ceylon. "If in the meantime Ceylon, particularly Colombo, is lost, all this gathering of a naval force will be futile. Therefore, the defence of Colombo by flak and aircraft must be considered as an object more urgent and not less important than the defence of Calcutta". Ibid. p.161. Also refer to p.129. Chap. X of the Hinge of Fate, which gives in details the great importance of Ceylon in Britain's war strategy.

he worked in close cooperation with the civil authorities, setting up a War Council consisting of the Governor, the Service Chiefs, the Civil Defence Commissioner, and the members of the Board of Ministers. It must be stated that in spite of these measures, the leaders of Ceylon, unlike those of India, whole-heartedly cooperated with the British war efforts. Even after December 1941, there may have been a little pro-Japanese feeling here and there, but it never clouded the vision of the Ceylonese leaders.

On February 10, 1942, theGovernor announced a further postponement of elections in Ceylon, which provoked a motion of non-confidence in the Board of Ministers. But it was defeated by an overwhelming vote[1]. In 1942, the Cripps Mission visited India. It had its immediate echo in Ceylon[2]. The Board of Ministers asked the Governor whether Cripps might visit Ceylon also, or at least receive a deputation in India for a declaration of Dominion Status after the war. On March 26, 1942, the State Council passed a resolution in favour of this, the only dissentients being the European and Burgher nominated members. This request was refused on the ground that the matter was one for the Colonial office, and that it was impossible for Sir Stafford Cripps to visit Ceylon or to deal with the problems of Ceylon[3]. The British Government stated that at the end of the war the question of constitutional reform in Ceylon will receive its first consideration. Nevertheless, strong

1. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.117.
2. Jeffries. op. cit. p.49.
3. Ibid. p.51.

representations continued to be made by Ceylon's political leaders on the question of constitutional advance[1]. Meanwhile thewar was taking a turn in favour of the Allies. On May 26, 1942, the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Oliver Stanley, made a statement in the House of Commons on the Government's intentions regarding constitutional reforms in the Island[2].

His Majesty's Government, he said, stood by the assurance given in 1941 to the Ceylon State Council that the Island would receive after the war full responsible government in all matters of internal civil administration. Control of the Island's defences and communications would be retained by the United Kingdom as far as considered necessary for the security of the Empire, including that of Ceylon itself, the cost being shared between the two governments in agreed proportions; while Ceylon's relation with foreign countries and other parts of the Commonwealth would also be subject to the direction and control of His Majesty's Government[3]. Under a new Constitution, the number of "reserved" Bills (those requiring the assent of the Governor as well as a majority of the State Council) would be largely reduced, and apart from those relating to the defence and Foreign relations, the provision would be restricted to Bills: (a) relating to the royal prerogative, the rights and property of His Majesty's subjects not

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1. See Jennings: Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon. Chapters 2 and 3.
2. Keesings Contemporary Archives. June 5-12, 1943. p.5810.
3. Ibid. p.5810.

resident in the Island, and the trade and shipping of any part of the Commonwealth; (b) evoking serious opposition in any racial or religious community, and involving, in the Governor's opinion, oppression or unfairness to any community, (c) relating to currency. These limitations would not prevent the Governor from assenting in the King's name to any measure relating to trade agreements concluded by Ceylon with other parts of the Commonwealth with the approval of the U.K. Government[1]. The precise framing of the constitution, said Mr. Stanley, could not be undertaken at the time when all the energies of the services and departments concerned were focussed on the successful prosecution of the war. When victory was achieved, however, the government would examine through a suitable Commission or conference such detailed proposals as the Ministers might in the meantime formulate, which would be accepted subject to the acceptance of the conditions previously set forth, and to their approval by three quarters of the members of the Ceylon State Council, excluding officers of State and the Speaker[2].

Dr. Senanayake, leader of the Ceylon State Council, speaking on behalf of the Board of Ministers declared on June 8, 1942 that the British declaration constituted a definite advance towards post-war self-government[3]. Other Ministers, although not entirely satisfied with this

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1. Ibid. p.5810.
2. Ibid. p.5810.
3. Jeffries. op. cit. p.180.

statement, nevertheless decided to formulate their own constitutional proposals, embodying them in the form of a draft Order-in-Council for submission to the Colonial Office[1]. In this task, they fortunately got the assistance of Sir Ivor Jennings, and by February 1944 the formidable task of drafting the Order-in-Council was completed. It must be stated that while it was being compiled by the ministers, misgivings about its possible contents were expressed on behalf of the Government of India and of minority communities in Ceylon[2]. The former was concerned about the status of Indians; the latter complained that they had not been consulted. The procedure adopted by the Ministers, it was alleged, had aroused resentment among the minorities. It was pointed out that there were vital differences of opinion on the quantum of representation of the different communities, the status of Indians and Europeans resident in Ceylon, the system of Executive Committees and the establishment of a Second Chamber[3]. To all these objections, the Secretary of State's reply was that he could not intervene and that the Ministers for Ceylon must use their own discretion about the procedure they adopted in preparing their draft[4].

The declaration of 1943 had clearly stated that the British Government would examine any detailed proposal submitted by the Ministers by means of a suitable Commission

1. Jennings: Approach to Self-Government. pp.87 ff.
2. Ibid. pp. 34 ff.
3. Namasivayam: Legislatures of Ceylon. pp. 97 ff.
4. For the Ministers' draft refer to Ceylon Sessional Paper XIV, 1944. This is also attached as an appendix in the Soulbury Report.

or Conference as soon as victory was achieved in the war. The Ministers in Ceylon, however, now began to ask for an immediate consideration of their scheme. "They submitted that urgent local circumstances made any early decision a vital necessity. Unless the life of the tate Council was again extended, a General Election would have to take place early in 1945 and a further extension would not be acceptable to public opinion unless the announcement of it was accompanied by an assurance that the General Election would be held under the new Constitution and within a reasonable time. This was in fact a request to vary the terms of the 1943 Declaration[1]. The Secretary of State could hardly be expected to agree to do so unless he was convinced that serious difficulties might arise, "either if events were allowed to take their course and a General Election was held early in 1945, or if the life of the State Council was extended without any reference being made to the impending promulgation of a new Constitution"[2].

What followed next is a story which clearly establishes that in the creation of the present Indo-Ceylon problems, British Imperialism had a big hand. On July 5, 1944, the Secretary of State made a statement in the House of Commons. Its terms are so important that it deserves to be quoted at some length. It ran:

> " In the Declaration of 1943 on the subject of reform of the Ceylon Constitution, His Majesty's Government invited the Ceylon Ministers to submit proposals for a new

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1. Jeffries. op. cit. Chap. 5.
2. Soulbury Report. Para 88.

Constitution, and promised that once victory was achieved such detailed proposals as the Ministers might in the meantime have been able to formulate in the way of a complete constitutional scheme would be examined by a Commission or Conference. Ministers have now submitted their draft scheme with an urgent request that arrangements may be made for its examination at an earlier date than that contemplated in the Declaration.

His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided to appoint a Commission to examine the Ministers' proposals, which would visit Ceylon for the purpose towards the end of the present year. The adoption of this course does not entail in other respects any modification of the Declaration of His Majesty's Government in regard to the eventual approval by His Majesty's Government of any new Constitution. It is the intention of His Majesty's Government that the appointment of the Commission should provide full opportunity for consultation to take place with the various interests, including the minority communities concerned with the subject of constitutional reform in Ceylon, and with the proposals which Ministers have formulated.

Further, in accordance with the object already declared of avoiding a General Election in Ceylon during the war, with consequent dislocation of Ceylon's war effort, the Ceylon (State Council) Order-in-Council, 1931, will be amended so as to prolong the life of the existing State Council for a further period of two years". (1).

To this announcement, the Ministers took serious objection. They did not like that the representatives of the minority communities should be consulted on the question of constitutional reforms in Ceylon. They argued that this amounted to a radical departure from the terms of the Declaration of 1943. They further contended that the

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1. Hansard, 5th July, 1944. Columns 1142-43.

function of the Commission should be confined to an examination of the Ministers' scheme, and that "the minorities would be sufficiently protected by the stipulation of a three-fourths majority when it came to be discussed in the State Council". These arguments did not appeal much to the authorities in London. A misunderstanding developed between Britain and Ceylon with the result that the Ministers decided to withdraw their scheme[1]. The principal argument of the British Government against the scheme was that the Ministers among themselves had not been able to reach unanimity. Mr. A.Mahadeva, a Ceylo Tamil, who had joined the Board of Ministers with the portfolio of Home Affairs in 1942 had insisted on his disagreement to be recorded[2]. On September 20, 1944, the British Government declared that they had decided to appoint a Commission which would visit the Island before the end of 1944[3]. This Commission consisted of 3 members Lord Soulbury as Chairman, Mr. Rees and Mr. Burrows[4]. They arrived in Ceylon in December 1944 and remained there for two months going round the entire Island and hearing a large number of deputations and meeting individuals[5]. Before we proceed to examine the working of this Commissio we may notice two important points - the achievements of the Donoughmore Constitution, and the proposals made by the Ministers in February 1944.

1. Published as Sessional Paper. XIV of 1944.
2. Keesing's Contemporary Archives. June 5-12, 1943. p.5810.
3. Cmd. 6677.
4. Ibid. p.3.
5. Ibid. p.4.

The Donoughmore Constitution operated during the most critical period of Ceylon's history. It has an extremely important bearing on the Indo-Ceylon problem as it developed during this period. A study of this aspect of Ceylon's history would also indicate the basic difference between the story of constitutional advance in India and that in Ceylon. While in India the policy of non-cooperation was tried, in Ceylon the political leaders decided to give the British Constitutional proposals a fair trial[1]. The legislation passed by the State Council put the Island on the road to development in the spheres of agriculture, health and education[2]. The State Council also showed a great deal of anxiety to do some planning for social welfare after the war. More important than this from the point of view of Indo-Ceylon relations is another development which must be noted. The leaders of Ceylon always resented the fact that the financial structure of the Island's economy was almost entirely in the hands of the non-Ceylonese. If a Ceylonese wanted to obtain a loan of any size, he had to apply either to the British-controlled Bank, or to an Indian money-lender. The former were not very much forthcoming; the latter were likely to charge exorbitant rates of interest. A State Mortgage Bank had started just before the State Council came into being[3]. Soon after this a Banking Commission was

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1. Jennings: Approach to Self-Government. p.197.
2. Ibid. p.139.
3. Pakeman. p.148.

appointed, and as a result of its recommendations the State-aided Bank of Ceylon was set up in 1935[1]. This could compete with the Commercial Banks and had an advantage over them in that it had the monopoly of Government business. In 1940 an Agriculture and Industrial Credit Corporation was set up[2]. The relevance of these developments to the Indo-Ceylon relations was very great. Most of the Tamils in Ceylon now could not lend money on excessive rates of interest. They now began to send their money more and more to South India, and this added an irritant to the relations of the two countries.

One more field of activity in which the State Council began to interest itself was industry. The Colonial Development Fund had made to Ceylon an outright grant of 7½ million pounds and several industrial enterprises had been planned, including a Textile Mill and a Plywood Factory. The outbreak of war in 1939 gave a boost to these plans. This era of cooperation between the Ceylonese and the British administration gave them a great deal of experience; it also imparted useful training to the Executive Officers in high places in the administration.

So far as the Ministers' scheme of February 1944 is concerned, it may be stated that although it was not technically before the Soulbury Commission, it provided a

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1. Ibid. p.149.
2. Ibid. p.149.

most valuable basis for discussion[1]. Under this scheme, the Executive Committee system was to be replaced by a full-fledged Cabinet of 10 led by a Prime Minister. An equal number of Deputy Ministers could be appointed. The legislature was to be uni-cameral and named the Council of State. At some future date a second Chamber could be set up, if necessary. The Council of State was to consist of 100 members, 95 of whom were to be elected on a territorial basis. This would imply greater representation of the minority communities, without accepting communal representation. The Governor-General could appoint 6 members to represent special interests. On the question of franchise for the Indian settlers, the Ministers did not say anything.

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THE SOULBURY COMMISSION AND INDEPENDENCE

During the period when the Soulbury Commission was at work in the Island, considerable effort was made behind the scenes to get the representatives of the minority communities to present a united front, which would ensure a representation in which the total of those communities would equal the total representation of the Sinhalese - the so-called fifty-fifty formula to which we have earlier referred[2]. But once again, the communal

1. Sessional Paper XIV. 1944. It was withdrawn by the Ceylon Ministers on August 18, 1944.
2. This is examined in detail by Namasivayam in his monograph "Parliamentary Government in Ceylon".

fissions concealed beneath the apparently seamless garment of Colombo middle class society were laid bare, and the Tamil proposal that, in order to prevent Sinhalese domination, the minorities together should control half the seats in the proposed legislature was definitely refused by the Burghers and the Muslim leaders [1]. The Soulbury Constitution changed the political system of Ceylon in two main directions - first it replaced the Executive Committee system by the Cabinet system. It proposed a Legislature (consisting of two Houses - the House of Representatives and the Senate) to which the Cabinet was to be responsible. Secondly, it reduced the powers of the British Government and the Governor with regard to the internal affairs of Ceylon, although this fell short of dominion status. The Governor-General retained complete control of External Affairs and Defence. The Government of Ceylon did not have the power to enforce laws on those of the citizens of Ceylon who were outside the Island [2]. The British Parliament still retained rights to pass laws for Ceylon on any matter. Any Bill could be reserved by the Governor-General for His Majesty's pleasure. This constitution was accepted by Ceylon's State Council in November 1945 and came into force by an Order-in-Council on May 15, 1946. Ceylon thereby became the first Crown colony and the first non-European territory of the Commonwealth and Empire to assume full responsibility in all

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1. Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 11.
2. Soulbury Report. Chapter XVI.

internal affairs[1].

Even when the Soulbury Commission was actually carrying on its negotiations, the State Council by an overwhelming majority, passed a resolution in favour of Dominion Status which implied full independence within the Commonwealth.[2] Events now overtook the Soulbury Constitution The victory of Labour in the British General Election in 1945 accelerated the pace of change in the colonies. The declared policy of the Labour party for many years had been the freeing of colonial peoples. The other major event was the scheme of partition of India and independence to Pakistan and India. With independence granted to these countries, freedom could not long be denied to Ceylon. Earlier we had stated that with the British occupation of India the smaller countries on the periphery of India - Burma, Nepal, Indochina, Indonesia and Ceylon - could not afford to retain their independence long. India had become the hub of a vast Imperialism[3]. The neighbouring countries must either be controlled by that power which controls India or by such other powers as are friendly to that power which commands India. It is on the basis of this logic that the encounter of Asia and the West throughout the 18th and 19th centuries must be understood. The first World War put Imperialism to retreat; the retreat was converted into a rout by the time that the second World War ended. Once

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1. Keesing's Contemporary Archives, June 15-22, 1946. p.7967
2. Weerawardana. pp. 115 ff.
3. This theme is very ably discussed by K.M.Panikkar in his work Asia and Western Dominance. Part II. Chap.I.

it became impossible for Britain to stay in India, it became clear that she could not continue to rule either Burma or Ceylon, or Nepal or indeed even Egypt and Palestine. Similarly it became clear that other Imperialisms, the Dutch, the French, and the Portuguese, must also pack up. In other words, with the fall of India as a citadel of British Imperialism the entire structure of Western Imperialism was shaken to its foundations[1]. From another point of view, once India was promised freedom, the leaders of Ceylon insisted that a similar promise should be made to them also. After all, the Indian leaders had been actively un-cooperative in the war effort of the allies[2]. Subhash Chandra Bose had even gone to the extent of forming the Indian National Army and setting up a parallel Government of India to fight the British in close cooperation with the Japanese. On the contrary, there had been full and willing cooperation from the Ceylonese people and their leaders. Moreover, ever since 1931, Ceylon had enjoyed something very near full internal self-government, and they had made a reasonable success of it. Where it failed, it was rather due to the defects of the Donoughmore Constitution. In the light of these circumstances, it became quite obvious that the Soulbury Report was out of date even on the day it was put into force[3].

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1. Ibid. pp. 95 ff.
2. Jennings: Approach to Self-Government. p.198.
3. Rose,S : op. cit. p.57.

The idea of immediate independence for Ceylon, however, did not very much appeal to the colonial Office. London still wanted to move slowly. In October 1946, a White Paper was issued, in which it was stated that the actual length of time during which dominion status would be granted to Ceylon must depend upon the experience gained by the people of Ceylon under the new Soulbury Constitution. Mr. Senanayake with an admirable sense of time, however, decided to accept the White Paper which, of course, nobody liked in Ceylon. This Document had caused a big disappointment. The State Council made a dignified protest. Soon negotiations began between Ceylon's political leaders and the British Government[1], the object of which was to bring Ceylon to full independence within the Commonwealth in as harmonious a fashion as possible. It was, of course, necessary for the British Government to safeguard its economic and strategic interests in the Island. The strategic value of Ceylon had been driven home during the course of the second World War, as we have already stated[2]. As long as Naval stmategy remained of first class importance, as it did upto the development of the strategy of nuclear warfare, the harbour of Trincomalee mattered very much. The air field at Katunayake was of considerable value from the point of view of air strategy[3]. The British Government now realised that it would be easier for them to secure guarantees for

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1. Charles Jeffries, op. cit. p.152.
2. Churchill, Sir Winston, op. cit. Vols. II, III, and IV.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. p.156.

these interests from Ceylon, if the Island could be granted dominion status sooner than envisaged. In May 1946 the Ceylon Constitution Order-in-Council had been promulgated and published[1]. Its provisions were to come into force by steps, but the green light was given for a general election to the first Parliament of Ceylon by this and two later Orders-in-Council[2]. While the election campaign was going on, Oliver Goonetilleke was in Britain to negotiate transfer of power on the basis of the offer made by Senanayake on Defence and External Affairs[3]. It was proposed that Britain should retain control of Trincomalee as well as Katunayake, along with certain other facilities for stationing troops in Ceylon. Britain would also undertake the responsibility of imparting military training to Ceylon. Senanayake's contention was that such an agreement would work out to the mutual benefit of both the parties and could be terminated at any future date by agreement. London also desired an agreement on the future of British officers in the service of the Ceylon Government[4].

In Ceylon, the news of these proposed agreements roused great suspicion in many quarters[5]. Another factor which interposed some delay in the transfer of power to Ceylon was the question of minorities. Finally, in October 1947 the decision to give full independence to Ceylon was

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1. Sessional Paper iii-1948.
2. Ibid. pp.8-9.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. Chapter 11.
4. Ibid. pp. 155-156.
5. Sir John Kotelawala: An Asian Prime Minister's Story. Chapter 8.

announced after London secured favourable agreements on bases but without waiting for a solution of the minority problem. A little earlier, the first general election to the Parliament of Ceylon had been held. On December 10, 1947 the Ceylon Independence Act passed through the British Parliament without any difficulty. On December 19, an Order-in-Council fixed 4th February 1948 as the date of formal independence. The essential features of the House of Representatives, Senate and Cabinet envisaged by Lord Soulbury and his colleagues continued into the era of independence, and a Governor-General remained as Head of the State[1]. D.S.Senanayake was the obvious choice for Prime Minister.

It may be stated that there were two principal ways in which the Constitution of Ceylon differed from that of India. The first is that the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council was retained as the final Court of Appeal; and the other is that there was no attempt to embody in the constitution anything like a declaration of human rights[2]. The only provision resembling this is where it is laid down that any law made by Parliament which 'shall (a) prohibit or restrict the free exercise of any religion, or (b) make persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable, or (c) confer on persons of any community or religion any privilege or advantage which

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1. Sessional Paper III. 1948. The Constitution of Ceylon.
2. Ibid. Part VI.

CEYLON
PROVINCIAL BOUNDARY...
(1900-1947)
Kankesanturai
Jaffna
Delft
NORTHERN PROVINCE
Mullaittivu
Mannar
Vavuniya
NORTH CENTRAL PROVINCE
Trincomalee
Puttalam
Anuradhapura
NORTH WESTERN PROVINCE
Polonnaruwa
Chilaw
Batticaloa
Kurunegala
CENTRAL PROVINCE
Matale
Kandy
EASTERN PROVINCE
Nagombo
WESTERN PROVINCE
SABARAGAMUWA PROVINCE
COLOMBO
Bibile
Badulla
UVA PROVINCE
Kalutara
SOUTHERN PROVINCE
Galle
Matara
Hambantota

is not conferred on persons of other communities or religions, or (d) alter the constitution of any religious body except with the consent of the governing authority of that body' will be void[1]. The decision on any dispute arising out of this clause of the constitution would presumably be settled by process of law in the Supreme Court, with provision for an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

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CONCLUSIONS

We may now draw a few conclusions from this historical survey of developments in Ceylon. In the first place it is obvious that Ramayana as a tradition is rather an unimportant factor for the understanding of the Indo-Ceylon relations today. Historically its veracity is not above challenge. Much of it is myth and legend; the rest is poetry. In Ceylon, at any rate, no intellectual attaches any importance to the tradition of the Ramayana. It is not commonly known in India that in the Ramayana story as told in the folklore of Lanka, not Ravana but Rama is the aggressor, the monarch of Lankapura having brought away Sita not for love of her beauty but to avenge Rama's insult to his sister. It is really interesting that Sita's unsullied chastity proved to Rama by her ordeal and the freedom allowed her by Ravana in her captivity gives some

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1. Ibid. Article 29.

plausibility to the Lanka folk tale and not Valmiki's story. In fact, the average Sinhalese does not like a reference to Ramayana at all. The only relic of the Ramayana tradition is the Sitaaelya a few miles away from Nuwaraelya, and all that one finds here today is a small temple where idols of Rama, Sita and Hanument in black stone are kept for stray visitors from India. The Hindu Tamils are more tolerant of the Ramayana legend for obvious reasons. Buddhism, as a historical factor, is more important in the present context. It is true that the Buddhist practice in Ceylon makes a contrast from some of the aspects of the cultural milieu of India, but on the whole, it does tend to bring Ceylon and India closer. The mere fact that Gautam Buddha was an Indian and that important Buddhist places of pilgrimage are all in India should be an important factor. Historically India in 1947 had a clear initial advantage in relation to Ceylon, quite as much as in relation to Burma and Nepal. In terms of actual results, it would always depend on the skilful manner in which we exploit this advantage. This aspect, however, does not fall within the purview of this thesis. Thirdly, since the dawn of history the Island has been subjected to invasions, and, for a variety of reasons, the successive waves of invaders who settled there and became the ancestors of the present population have never been completely fused into a united and homogeneous people. The main spring board of these invaders was naturally India, and it was thence that, according to tradition, the

Sinhalese who are the majority community came in the 6th century B.C. When their age-long struggle began with the Tamils, the principal minority community, who also came from India, is obscure. In the course of it, considerable blending of the two races undoubtedly took place, but the fact that the Sinhalese adopted Buddhism, while the Tamils remained Hindus, tended to maintain the distinction. The predominance of the Tamils in the extreme North, where they were able to maintain close contact with their fellow Dravidians in India, while the Aryan Sinhalese in Southern Ceylon were permanently cut off from their original home in North India, also helped the two groups to preserve their separate traditions, and the two languages survived. The Sinhalese who in 1947 numbered about four millions and the Ceylon Tamils of whom there were nearly 700,000, are thus the descendants of the early settlers in the Island.

The first Mohammedans to establish themselves in Ceylon were the Arabs who came as traders from the shores of the Persian Gulf in the 8th century A.D. They originally settled near the coast and only gradually extended their activities inland. By the 15th century they had won for themselves a position of considerable importance. Their religion guaranteed their survival as a distinct community, and the "Moors", as they came to be called, in 1947 numbered nearly 400,000. They are widely distributed throughout the Island with several quite considerable

concentrations. It was only the advent of the Portuguese which prevented Ceylon from falling under the complete control of the Muslims. The main outcome of the conquest of Ceylon by the Portuguese and the Dutch was that the political relations between India and Ceylon were severed. By 1818, the British had been firmly settled in the Island. The British rule in Ceylon, on the one hand, introduced a foreign element in the cultural heritage of Ceylon which was largely Indian in complexion; and, on the other, it imported cheap Indian labour in Ceylon for the cultivation of the estates. As elsewhere, the colonial policy had the unfortunate result of creating tensions between the Indian settlers and the indigenous population. The present Indo-Ceylon problem is thus the contribution of the British rule in India and Ceylon. Most British writers, including Sir Ivor Jennings, do not agree with this conclusion[1]. But leaders in India as well as in Ceylon think differently. Sir John Kotelawala in his memoirs pointedly writes:

> " The Indo-Ceylon problem is largely a legacy of the old colonialism. It started with the opening of plantations or estates in the territory of the former Kandyan Kings by British capitalists some 125 years ago. The local population, which was Sinhalese by race and language and Buddhist by religion, occupied and owned the paddy lands in the valleys of this territory, while it used the hills, which were covered with jungle or patna (2) for the pasturing of cattle, the collection of firewood and timber, and the cultivation of chenas(2).

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1. Refer to Approach to Self-Government. pp.26 ff; 139 ff; and 197 ff. These arguments are advanced in other works such as The Commonwealth In Asia. Chap.VI, and The British Commonwealth. Chapter XI.
2. Patna is thick grass land on the mountain tops. Chena is land that is periodically cultivated.

> The British treated these unoccupied hills as Crown lands, and disposed of them at nominal rates to capitalists who were prepared to cultivate coffee and - after the failure of coffee - tea and rubber. Labour was imported from South India and housed on the estates. It was imported by foreign capitalists, with the assistance of the foreign Government then in power. It was accorded special privileges, some of them by statute, and Indian labourers were given facilities of travelling up and down between Ceylon and their homes in India. In course of time the Sinhalese population in the Kandyan villages multiplied without having room of expansion, for it was penned into its narrow valleys by the estates" (1).

Similarly, the late Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on many occasions referred to the role of British Imperialism in the creation of the minority problems in South East Asia. In his Discovery of India he even hinted that with the elimination of Imperialism from the Pacific, India would inevitably exercise an important influence here, and that India would develop as a centre of economic and political activity in the Indian Ocean area, in South East Asia and right upto the Middle East. He added :

> " Her position gives an economic and strategic importance in a part of the world which is going to develop rapidly in the future. If there is a regional grouping of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean on either side of India - Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Siam, Java, etc. - present-day minority problems will disappear, or at any rate will have to be considered in an entirely different context"(2).

It is thus clear that just as geographically Ceylon is part of the Indian system, historically also Ceylon has been greatly influenced by the religious and cultural movements in India. The physical contact has been

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1. An Asian Prime Minister's Story. p.101.
2. Jawahar Lal Nehru: The Discovery of India. p.550.

reinforced by contacts of ideas. The existing difficulties in the relations between the two countries arise because of the policies followed by the British rulers in India and in Ceylon. Even today, the leadership of both India and Ceylon invariably shows an awareness of the historic ties between the two countries. These ties are racial, linguistic, and religious. They are reflected in customs, traditions, habits and requirements of the people. Left to itself the Island has, throughout its recorded history, looked to India for guidance and inspiration. One may even go so far as to say that inspite of all formalities which are enforced in the matter of passports and visas, Ceylon is as much part of the Indian consciousness as the Himalayas. Geography and History have created visible and invisible links between the two countries and these manifest themselves in numerous points of cultural contacts which we examine in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

INDO-CEYLON RELATIONS : THE CULTURAL FACTOR

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ENCOUNTER OF CULTURES

The consensus of opinion among the scholars today is that India has held a central position in the civilizations of the world. In February 1957, a seminar was conducted by Prof. Arnold J. Toynbee, the well known British historian, at the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi. In this seminar 23 Indian Universities participated and there were scholars from Britain, West Germany, the United States of America and other countries. The consensus of the seminar was that India had materially influenced the culture of South East and South Asian countries. As Dr. Toynbee put it, "the contact of civilization in this area often resulted in India becoming the giver and the people of South East Asia the receivers"[1] It was widely felt that the origin of India's cultural influence in East and South Asia lay in religion and military conquests. The missionaries were the agencies through which the message of Buddhism was carried to Ceylon and to other countries like China and Japan[2]. Political conquests and trade were other instruments of India's cultural impact. Geographical factors had almost a compulsive effect in enabling the Indian culture to be

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1. India Quarterly. Vol. xiv. no.2.1958. p.166
2. Skinner, Major : Fifty Years in Ceylon. p.98.

assimilated in Ceylon[1]. Since the earliest inhabitants of Ceylon had gone from India, either North or South, there was not much difficulty in the process of adjustment[2]. In the history of the world, one can see a process where the receiving civilization has generally been compelled by circumstances to adopt the whole of any foreign culture; it has often been difficult for it to adopt some elements of a foreign culture and reject others. Picking and chosing has often not been possible, and wherever the effort has been made, it failed. The case of Japan is an illustration of this principle. When they came in contact with the West, they deliberately tried to pick and choose; that is to say, they wanted to adopt the more superficial elements of Western civilization with the purpose of defending the interior castle of their own culture and leading their own traditional way of life in that sphere[3]. For example, they wanted to modernize their army on Western lines in order to hold their own against the Western powers; at the same time, they were also determined to preserve their traditional life so far as religion and family were concerned. This dichotomy could not solve any problem at all[4].

It is thus clear that an encounter between civilizations has often led to one civilization overpower-

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1. Pieris, P.E. (Trans): Ribeiro's History of Ceilao. Chapter I. Also refer to Moodie, A.E.:Geography Behind Politics. Chapter II.
2. Sarkar, N.K : The Demography of Ceylon. Chapter 2.
3. Clyde, Paul H: The Far East. 3rd Edition. New Delhi. Chapter 13.
4. Bain, Chester A: The Far East. Chapter 6. Also refer to Arthur Tiedmann: Modern Japan. Chapter 1.

ing another. In cases where a civilization is well established, before its encounter with another civilization takes place, the process of adaptation is exceedingly difficult. But when we examine the cultural contacts between India and Ceylon, the position is basically different. As we stated in the last chapter, from the earliest times the Tamils from South India had established a flourishing settlement in the North of Ceylon. The recorded history of Ceylon begins from the 3rd Century B.C., when King Devanampiya Tissa ruled at Anuradhapura and he was a descendant of King Vijaya. It is during this period that Emperor Asoka sent Mahinda and Sangamitra from India to propagate the gospel of the Buddha. The King was the first convert and he made Buddhism the religion of the State[1]. At this time history has no records of any languages or religions that prevailed in Ceylon except those of the Tamils. With the advent of Buddhism also came the Pali language in which Buddhism was actually propagated in Ceylon. The Sinhalese language appears to have originated from languages like Pali, Tamil, Malayalam etc. The formation of the alphabet and the vocabulary of Sinhalese language also clearly indicate this fact.

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1. In fact, the Mahabodhi at Anuradhapura in Ceylon itself grew from a sapling of the sacred Bodh tree in Buddha Gaya, India, under which the Buddha achieved enlightenment. The sapling was taken to the Island by Princess Sangmitra, daughter of Asoka, as a gesture of friendship for King Devanampiya Tissa of Ceylon. It is this gift which was returned to India by Mrs. Bandaranaike in October 1964.

Buddhism which was$ fast spreading with state assistance did not replace the then prevailing Tamil religion and culture but became complementary. Thus Buddhism and Hinduism flourished side by side during this period and later[1].

Successive Sinhalese Kings showed a spirit of tolerance towards Hinduism, and the Hindu Kings towards Buddhism. The renovation of a Vihara by the Chola King Elara, the endowment by King Gajabahu (as indicated by the Konamalai inscriptions) to Koneswaram, the popularising of the Pattini Cult by the same King after visiting the Pattini Festival in Chera country in South India, the founding of a Siva temple by Vijayabahu I near Kantalai, the removation of a Vishnu temple at Dondra by Parakrama Bahu II, the construction of a Mariamman temple at Bentota by the same King and a plethora of other historical evidence go to show the spirit of friendliness that prevailed among the two communities professing two different faiths. This clearly shows that the present indigenous inhabitants of Ceylon had their origin from India and the language and culture also had similar origins[2].

There is not the slightest doubt about the elements of the indigenous culture in Ceylon. As we will observe in the course of this chapter, Ceylon has its own cultural tradition. The traditional cultures of the Island

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1. The Indo-Ceylon Problem. A Historical Background. MSS. No.287. National Archives of Ceylon. Nuwara Eliya.
2. Ibid. p.4.

have gone through a period of obsolescence, if not of a partial disintegration and decay; and an analysis of the psychological conditions that were responsible for this state of affairs should throw light on the problem under disćussion. Ceylon has, in its recorded history of two thousand five hundred years, come under the influence of a number of foreign cultures [1]. Some of these foreign cultures satisfied the conditions necessary for integration with indigenous culture and, the resulting process was one of enrichment of the indigenous culture, while other foreign cultures not satisfying these conditions failed either to get integrated with or to enrich the indigenous culture [2]. The mere fact of cultural impact gives no indication of the extent of effects, and the impact of these must be sought by means of a closer examination of the socio-psychological nature of the impact. The Dravidian-Hindu culture was one of those that successfully got integrated with the Aryan-Buddhist culture of the Sinhalese [3]. A number of factors were responsible for this integration.

It will be useful to remember that the two cultures had kindred origins and many common elements of form, method and ideal. It is true that the initial impact of the two cultures was not at the level of the common man, but it infiltrated very swiftly to the level of the common

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1. Davy, John: An Account of the Interior of Ceylon. 1821. p.49.
2. Elliot, C.W.B: The Real Ceylon. Chapters 1-2.
3. Hussey: Ceylon and World History. Vol.I. Chapter 1.

man on account of the congeniality of the new culture to the existing culture[1]. This is a factor of prime importance in culture encounter. The ultimate custodians and the abiding transmitters of the traditional cultures of a society are not its elite, but its common folk, and it is through them that cultural diffusion and cultural integration can take place on an extensive scale. Home, for example, is the place where the cultural performance occurs; it is the centre for a fixed cycle of rites, ceremonies and festivals (including both the life-cycle and nature-cycle rites). The temple is a centre for another set of daily rites and periodic festivals[2]. Beyond the home and the temple are the maths or the devales, not so much centres of cultural performances as seats of the highest spiritual authority of the Bhikkus. The cultural stage also includes public halls where mixed audiences enjoy various events, sponsored by cultural associations. It is, therefore, obvious that though the elite serves the function of sowing the seeds of the new culture, these seeds will bear fruits in the cultural life of the average man only in so far as they are in harmony with the existing culture[3]. When this harmony exists, even the so-called cultural specialists are accepted without any emotional conflict; after all, the temple priests, the domestic priests, the astrologers, the reciters, story tellers,

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1. Keble, W.T: Ceylon, Beaten Track. p.31.
2. The Far Eastern Quarterly. Vol.XV. No.I. p.24.
3. Motwani, K: India: A Synthesis of Cultures. Chap.I.

singers, dancers, dramatic performers and instrumental musicians and painters - all of them operate with a view to creating effect on the community. In more recent times the Press, the Radio and the Movies have developed new types of cultural specialists in the form of editors, programme directors, story writers and producers. The effect of all these agents would depend upon the factor of harmony between the giving culture and the receiving culture[1]. An example of this is the contact of Indo-Ceylon cultures. We can see many Buddhist practices of the present day which though alien to the doctrine of Buddhism, and having their roots in Hinduism, are nevertheless in the cultural tradition of Buddhism and, therefore, eminently acceptable to the people (Meat-eating for example)[2].

Another important factor which explains the rapid assimilation of Indian cultural elements in the cultural stream of Ceylon is that the Hindu Dravadian culture that made its impact on Sinhalese culture did not offer itself as the culture of an over-lord exercising an unchallenge-able superiority but rather as the culture of a co-existing equal. There was no compelling urge for embracing it; there was no incentive to rush headlong and seek identification with it. What influence it had was the result of a long historical process. It was a selective process too, in the sense that only those aspects of Hindu-Dravadian culture that were congenial to Sinhalese culture

1. Wickremasinghe: Aspects of Sinhalese Culture. p.10.
2. G.C.Mendis. op. cit. Chapter 3.

could have entered Sinhalese culture. Its total effect was not one of supplanting but one of supplementing and enriching, and the elements that entered from outside lost their foreignness in the process of entering, so much so that they became an integral part of Sinhalese culture. On occasions, the wise in their folly attempt to separate the elements that have synthesised together but the common man is untouched by these attempts and accepts his cultural heritage in its wholeness.

In contrast to the Hindu-Dravadian culture whose elements entered almost imperceptibly into Sinhalese culture and formed a synthesis with it, the European cultures that came with the arrival of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English failed to satisfy the socio-psychological conditions for integration with the indigenous culture[1]. In the first place the impact was not an impact of Western cultures in their wholeness and in their variety. On the contrary, the impact that the people in Ceylon (and no doubt those in other Asian countries, too) felt, was confined to that insignificant diluted and false segment of Western culture that was exportable[2]. It has been said of the Englishman that he ceased to be an Englishman east of Suez. In other words, he ceased to be the ambassador of his traditional culture[3]. He may not have become entirely cultureless but he certainly did not

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1. J.E.Jayasuriya: Some Psychological Aspects of Cultural Revival. p.64.
2. Ibid. p.65.
3. Wijesekera, N.D: Ceylon Today. Vol.II. No.2, 1953.

reflect the culture of the common men of his country. Thus, the indigenous cultures did not come into contact with the undiluted genuine traditional cultures of the West. Furthermore, the impact could not, at any rate, except in its most superficial elements, infiltrate to the level of the common man, for the new culture was entirely out of tune with the existing culture [1]. It was strange and foreign, couched in symbols and forms of expression that were completely alien to the existing culture. At the level of the common man there was a total failure in culture communication and it is, therefore, not surprising that there was no cultural assimilation or integration [2].

The so-called upper class certainly came into contact with those partial and diluted segments of European culture exemplified by the European in Ceylon, and those of the upper classes who read European languages were, of course, exposed to other segments of European culture as well [3]. But what was seen had a much greater influence than what was merely read. It must also be remembered that the European culture offered itself as the superior culture of an over-lord; there were compelling social and psychological reasons for embracing it and rushing headlong to seek identification with it. It was, therefore, a graft rather than a growth, and often the indigenous was consciously

1. Barnett, L.D: Guide To Sinhalese Folklore. Chapter I.
2. Ibid. p.21.
3. Ibid. p.66.

rejected and suppressed in the process. It is, of course, true that the indigenous elements were too strong to be completely destroyed[1]. The result both in India and Ceylon has been that bi-culturality in the upper and upper middle classes was seldom harmonious, for there had been no synthesis. It is a common sight in both countries that a University Professor or a high Government official or even a Scientist attempts to live in the English style, speaks to his wife and children in English, sends his children to English schools, dresses in English style, and yet sits for an hour to practise Puja after the ancient Hindu religious systems, reads sacred books, consults an astrologer in times of difficulties, and even believes in superstitions of all sorts. This is the result of a lack of synthesis between the Western and indigenous cultures. [illegible]. The common man, in his desire to emulate and identify himself with the upper classes, began to neglect and be ashamed of his traditional culture and to practise it less and less with the passing of years[2]. Throughout the colonial rule, the real peril to the traditional cultures of both India and Ceylon was essentially an internal one, namely the impact of the upper class on the attitudes, ideals and practices of the common man. The danger has been that the common man has been becoming cultureless, not that he has been westernized. He tended to abandon his native heritage without finding a

1. Coomaraswamy, A.K. J.R.A.S. (C.B.) XIX. 1906.
2. Wijesekera, N.D: Dynamism of Traditional Cultures. p.16.

new one.

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CULTURE AND TRADITION

Before we consider the Indo-Ceylon cultural relations, it is necessary that we explain the sense in which we use the terms "culture" and "tradition". Tradition is an accretion of lore through the process of transmission and preservation in successive stages; from generation to generation, from family to family, from caste to caste, from father to son, from teacher to pupil, from school to school[1]. This lore is acquired not by written records but by oral communication or by precept and example, by trial and error. Such ancient lore has been preserved from ancient times and the crystallisation of any specific element in it is known as tradition. This is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic process. The process itself undergoes continuous change yielding place to external influences, and internal adjustments. The irrelevant and non-essential elements get sifted and left behind in the process of time[2]. But the main current of values capable of influencing the group or community continues. This continuum of values evolved through generations is potent in maintaining the spirit of the community. It sustains the virility of its people. Therefore, a tradition plays a vital role in the survival, evolution or development of

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1. Ibid, p.16.
2. Powys, John Cowper: The Meaning of Cultures. Chapters I-II.

a community; and the potentiality of such development depends on the strength of adaptability of the cultural trends[1]. The traditions thus acquire an antiquity and a national and social recognition almost amounting to religious worship and belief.

The term culture is difficult to define and it has been given different meanings by different authorities. For the purposes of this thesis, a distinction must be maintained between culture and civilization. Culture must necessarily take into account not only the assemblage of industries and technical processes, but also other factors such as art, customs and beliefs[2]. The latter elements alone help us to know anything of the life and mind of the people themselves. Civilization denotes a larger and more extensive unit than a culture; it may consist of many cultures, the connecting bond between each being the conditions of modes of life or training. On the basis of cultures, a civilization may be designated as a nomadic civilization, or an agricultural civilization, or a material civilization, depending on the mode of life or the values emphasized. Civilization is the physical development of the natural ability of a community which enables it to enjoy the highest fruits of society. Culture, on the other hand, tempers the civilization with a sense of value in determining what is lasting and morally binding for the good of humanity. In this sense, a

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1. Taylor, G.R.S.(Ed): Great Events In History. Chap.I.
2. Shephard B. clough: Basic Values of Western Civilization. Chap.I.

community that has a culture need not necessarily be the most advanced in material progress.

In broad terms, a culture may be defined succintly as a way of life shared by members of a human society or group of societies. Within a culture people act according to recognizable pattern, that is, they have distinctive ways of responding in feeling and thought to different types of stimuli, as for example, feeling and thinking about hunger, about other people, about sex, and about nearly all other human problems. Cultures have symbols of their beliefs, like totem poles and national flags[1]. They have special techniques for accomplishing such tasks as making clothing, getting and preparing food, transporting people and their belongings, and building places in which to dwell[2]. They have distinctive ways of organizing people for living together. They have recognizable styles of architecture, music, drawing, painting, carving and story-telling. Most characteristic of all, however, they have basic values regarding what people want to get in life, such as entry into heaven, freedom from want, the achieving of some masterpieces, control over their physical environment, or harmony in their relations with their fellow beings[3]. A pattern of culture is learned by individuals who compose the culture and is transmitted from generation to generation. Consequently, these patterns have high degree of continuity, but they do

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1. Ibid. p.9.
2. Ibid. pp.6-7.
3. Powys. op. cit. pp. 35 ff.

fluctuate in response to population changes, famines and pestilence, inventions, and borrowing from others[1]. Because patterns of culture are derived from responses to human problems and because inter-cultural transfers of behaviour are common, the drawing of hard and sharp lines between cultures is hazardous.

It is also necessary to remember that traditional cultures (such as in India and Ceylon) embody the genius of the people and reflect in them "the verities of life". These survive with the people of rural areas and not amongst the urban populations[2]. This is true of all traditional cultures practically in every part of the world. It is the new and the sophisticated that is popular with the urban folk; they are more susceptible to change, more daring and more progressive[3]. The rural folk are averse to change, less daring and more conservative. There is, therefore, a constant conflict between the two elements; an interplay of psychical forces and cultural complexes; a balancing of values and an adaptability to new forces. From these formulations the importance of two factors becomes obvious. In the first place, the cultural media; secondly, the influences that change cultures. So far as the cultural media are concerned, they include song, dance, drama, language, political tradition etc. The content of these forms is as important as the proficiency of the medium[4]. In other words, we have to see whether the

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1. Ibid. p.194.
2. Russell, Bertrand: Let The People Think. pp.100 ff.
3. Hardayal: Hints For Self-Culture. pp.56-57.
4. Milton Singer: The Cultural Pattern of Indian Civilization. pp.32-33.

cultural media of India and Ceylon express a common content, and a similar landscape. Once we determine this, it will not be difficult for us to see the factors which are responsible for the decay and decline of some of the cultural elements in both countries. Spoken language is the pre-eminent cultural medium; it is itself a constituent of culture, it symbolizes elements of belief and practice, and, as an activity, articulates with other aspects of socio-cultural organization[1]. A study of these different forms of cultural media in their respective social and cultural contacts would, in our opinion, reveal them as important links in that cultural continuum which includes village and town, the little and the great traditions, the higher and the lower castes, and various other social levels. For the Sinhalese Buddhist in Ceylon, the Buddhist places of pilgrimage in India are extremely important; for the Tamil, a visit to Hardwar or to other rivers in South India has its own importance. Thus, does "the sacred geography" of the land extend cultural consciousness beyond one region. One Hari Katha artiste who hailed from South India and happened to be touring Ceylon said that she had given performances all over India as well as in Burma and Ceylon. Outside the Tamil speaking areas her audience rarely understood her Tamil narration, but never failed to respond to her songs and pantomine, because they were familiar with the Puranic and epic stories she recited.

As far as the influences that change cultures are

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1. Ibid. p.34.

concerned, it may be stated that on the physical plane they are political, social, technical and industrial; and on the psychical plane they are prestige, immitation, borrowing, and adoption. Both categories of influences operate in conjunction. The three terms of culture - contact - and - change are: (a) the impinging culture with its institutions, intentions and interests, (b) the reservoir of indigenous customs, beliefs and living traditions, and (c) the process of contact and change where members of the two cultures co-operate, conflict or compromise[1]. There is a state of suspension or a period of inactivity when the dynamism of a culture may for obvious reasons remain dormant. Such a period of inactivity began with the advent of the Europeans both in India and Ceylon[2]. This advent was almost simultaneous in the two countries and, therefore, it should have had similar effect on the cultural tradition of India and Ceylon. But what we actually find is that so far as Ceylon is concerned, the colonial rule produced a greater rift between the upper classes and the rest of the people than it did in the case of India. In Ceylon a new upper class appeared, which adopted the English language as its own language, took English names, followed English manners to a nice degree of perfection, and made every effort not to identify itself with the people of the country[3]. These people patterned their lives and their interests on those of their rulers and took pains to keep

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1. N.D.Wijesekera: op. cit. p.18.
2. E.R.Sarath Chandra: The Traditional Culture of Ceylon. p.99.
3. Williams, H: Ceylon. pp.309 ff.

abreast of the latest developments in England in the field of art or music or literature. The upper classes (including the higher strata of the middle class) constituted, therefore, a cultural and linguistic group forming a minority within the wider group of the Sinhalese people with whom they were related only by blood [1]. The cultural situation in Ceylon from 1900 to 1947 may best be understood in the light of this social phenomenon.

In the case of India it had been different, as we stated earlier. Here, the upper classes still had their roots in the traditional culture although they learnt the English language, read English literature, and became aware of new values and new ideals of life and art through their contact with the West. Particularly in Bengal the contact with Western culture proved a stimulus to the native culture and produced a flowering of it, and the leadership came from the upper and middle classes who, not being so cut off from their traditional roots as the Sinhalese upper classes, were able to incorporate whatever they wished to of Western culture into the pattern of the indigenous culture so as to make it more acceptable to the modern mind.

As a result of this rift, literature and art lost their patronage in Ceylon [2]. The new upper classes, constituting the big businessmen, owners of tea, rubber and coconut plantations, and the professional people with

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1. Hussey. op. cit. Vol.II. Chapter III.
2. Karunaratne, L.K: Folk Art of the Sinhalese. Ceylon Daily News. Dec. 19, 1949.

higher incomes had no interest whatsoever in the literature of the arts of Ceylon. Hence although there has been a revival in literature, drama and music, brought about by contact with the West and by new contacts with India (made possible by modern methods of communication), this revival had for its patrons only people of the lower middle class and part of the city working class; and the upper classes have remained completely unaware of the fact that around them there is being created a new literature, a new music, and a new drama which is striving to take a place in the national life[1]. In fact, the revival often had for its theme the satirising of the upper classes for their wholesale imitation of the English[2].

The above remarks apply mostly to Colombo and the coastal suburbs. The village culture continued to some extent, in those villages particularly where there was a fairly wealthy landed class who had not adopted Western tastes, and in those suburban towns like Ambalangoda, Matara and certain parts of Galle, where a well-to-do group of small businessmen arose corresponding to the landed gentry of the village. In the Kandyan Provinces, the survival of the feudal aristrocracy and the retention by some of the big temples of the old system of service tenure for annual ceremonies like perahdras gave the arts continued patronage; and hence arts like Kandyan dancing still possess

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1. Wickremasinghe, Martin: Aspects of Sinhalese Culture. p.70.
2. Ibid. p.72.

something of their old vitality[1]. Although the Kandyan aristocracy became as anglicised as the upper classes of Colombo, their official position as chieftains made it necessary for them to retain something of the traditional culture at least for ceremonial purposes, and hence they have preserved their dress and a few of their customs, and they continue to patronise dancers and musicians for festive occasions.

§ 3

CASTES IN INDIA AND CEYLON

The sense in which we have defined the terms culture and tradition will indicate that cultural history cannot be studied in isolation, even as much as political history. It is an expression of life, and it cannot be separated from life as a whole. We, therefore, reiterate that the political and economic system and the social institutions which form the basis of cultural life must always be borne in mind, while studying Indo-Ceylon cultural relations. The economic, social and political background of Ceylon was essentially Indian, and the modifications which it went through up to the end of the 15th century and to a limited extent after that time were mainly due to Indian developments. In other words, up to the end of the 15th century Ceylon was a unit of the civilization of India and was thus closely bound up with

1. Ellawala Banda, "Kandyian Dancing and Music", Times of Ceylon, Nov. 20th and 27th, 1949.

whatever changes that took place on the sub-continent. This does not mean that life and culture in Ceylon was uniform with that of India. In India itself owing to its vast size, cultural life varied from area to area according to the physical background of the races that inhabited them, the form of economic life which each followed, the social conditions peculiar to each area, and the expression or expressions of Hinduism that each area preferred. Ceylon, like these diverse regions, possessed a variety of life and culture of its own, though in the main, it was Indian[1].

In the first chapter we have already stated that Ceylon geographically is a projection of the Deccan with two zones corresponding to the Malabar and the Coromandel regions. The early settlers corresponded to the races in India and definitely came to Ceylon from there[2]. The Veddahs are the traditional huntsmen of Ceylon, and according to legend they are the descendents of Kuveni's children by Vijaya, the first Sinhala king[3]. They are a mixture of the Negritos and the proto-Australoids, two of the first races that came to India; they have still their counter-parts among the hill tribe in Orissa. After the Veddahs came the Aryan speaking people from North India. As they spread, their language was adopted and modified by non-Aryan peoples. The Aryan dialects of ancient India all reveal these modifications, but the modifications were greatest in the Sinhalese language. Another people

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1. G.C.Mendis: "Ceylon Today and Yesterday". pp.27-28.
2. Ibid. p.28.
3. Vijayatunga. op. cit. p.209.

that came to Ceylon were those who spoke the Dravidian tongue. Their immigration began from very early times, but their numbers became considerable only from about the 10th century A.D. As in India, the chief occupation of the early settlers in Ceylon was agriculture, mainly rice cultivation. This necessitated a considerable amount of water which, in the Dry Zone of Ceylon was obtained by the construction of reservoirs and by diverting water from rivers into canals. These methods of irrigation were also tried in India before the Christian era. Rice cultivation also led to the development of villages around the tanks or by the rivers and canals, and as in India the village became the economic, social and administrative unit[1].

The evolution of society also ran on the same lines as in India. At the top there was the Royal family; then came the Chiefs, priests and monks; and at the bottom, the cultivators and craftsmen. There was hardly anything like a middle class. In India, the four divisions of society, the priests, the warriors, the traders, and craftsmen and cultivators gradually divided themselves into castes and sub-castes. In Ceylon also there developed the caste of Brahmins and Chandalas. And as time passed, with the joint family as the unit of society and with the acceptance of the belief in Karma and rebirth, the caste system was gradually adopted by the rest of society also. One authority has thus described the origins of the caste

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1. Motwani,K: India, a Synthesis of Cultures. Chapter III.

system in Ceylon :

> " Possibly the four main Aryan groupings into Brahmin, Warrior, Trader and Slave was accepted in early Ceylon. Later, other influences reacted in eliminating the ancient stigmas and helped to forget them. A change in values ushered in new distinctions that appeared under euphemistic titles or foreign linguistic words. Caste has been organised on the principle of function with the king or chief as the central head. Certain peoples who were originally grouped together and followed a certain act, function, or profession came afterwards to be known by the name of the art, function or profession. The respectability, superiority and precedence attached to each caste fluctuated with the importance and value affixed to each by social convention or regal authority. From times of old Sinhalese society consisted of agricultural peasants, the chief farmer being nominally the king himself. The Brahmins assisted in spiritual, constitutional and advisory capacities. The merchants of diverse kinds were also known. The fourth class consisted of slaves and menials. The agriculturists since they tended to be possessed of economic power increased their numbers and acquired power. They became the warriors and hence the rulers. With political authority and majesty there developed a superiority of the persons belonging to these circles. These became the chief castes". (1).

There is, of course, a wide divergence between the caste system of Ceylon and that in India [2]. Amongst communities that believed in castes, a good caste man coming from one country to another retained the privileges of his good caste; so a man of lower caste was subject to the disadvantages he suffered in his own land. The proud Brahmin of India received in Lanka a different treatment from what his Shudra compatriot would [3]. The differences

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1. Wijesekera, N.D: The People of Ceylon. pp.58-59.
2. Vijayatunga. op. cit. p.205.
3. Dolapihilla,P: Sinhalese Music and Minstrelsy. p.38.

between the caste systems in the two countries are brought out by Mr. Dolapihilla as follows :

> " Brahmins were brought to cure King Panduvasdeva of '*dividos*'. Those claiming descent from these Brahmins in Lanka - they practise the art of their forbears and till very lately had even the table manners of the Indian Brahmin - fell into a very humble caste-group, the naketi people. Centuries later, Brahmins were again brought to Kurunagala. The Goyigama palanquin-bearers of the rulers in Kurunagala refused to render their hereditary *rajakariya* because the new king was an Arab lady's offspring. Prince Vattimi's Arab advisers promised to bring Brahmins, men of far better caste than the Goyigama people, to take the place of the proud palanquin men. They inveigled a band of the best Brahmins of Soli - Raja to their ships and brought them hither captives. Under persuasion and threat the men settled down to the palanquin service of Prince Vattimi. When the young Brahmins - they were all men in their prime - wanted wives, the king's ministers were commanded to get them suitable partners. A number of women were brought and the young men were asked to choose whom they liked. Of the women there were good-looking young ones as well as middle-aged dames. The former were all of the *Hangara* caste, and the latter Goyigama women. The new comers had no hesitation in selecting the comeliest lasses. And those Brahmins had to take their place much below the Goyigama people. In India the cultivator is a sudra; here he is at the top of the social ladder". (1)

Between 1900 and 1947 there were 43 main castes in Ceylon [2]. Some of these castes had their own sub-divisions. Even today, while contracting marriages, caste

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1. Sinhalese Music and Minstrelsy. p.38.
2. Badadela; Bedde; Bandara; Batgama; Berawa; Durawa; Durayi; Embetta; Gadi; Gahala; Gattaru; Goyigama; Hakuru; Halagama; Hinna; Huluvali; Hunne; Karawa; Lokuru; Navandanna; Nekati; Oli; Padu; Panna; Panikka; Patti; Porokara; Rada; Rodiyas; Salagama; Vanni; Vahampura; Bharata; Lansi; Miko; Burasian; Kapiri; Mukkaru; Paravaru; Ahikuntaka; Waggai; Ja; Marakkala.

distinctions are observed. Before independence the government ostensively encouraged the perpetuation of caste observances under a cloak of secret preferential treatment[1] for some castes in certain offices[2]. In the village, caste throughout the period under review was an active force deciding and controlling its affairs. Each individual knew the other's caste and, therefore, each one expected preferential and respectful treatment according to his rank. It was impossible to make a so-called lower-caste individual sit down in a chair in the presence of Goyigama neighbours. But there was a great deal of coordination between the different sections of each caste; each caste had its appropriate function and place. The Dhobis, Drummers, and other craftsmen rendered the essential services of the village organisation and each of these constituted an integral part of the whole system. It was only after 1947 that fresh wind began to blow and the traditional manner of life began to break up. During the British period, of course, western education and manner began to make their influence felt, so that cracks in the older system became visible. As in India so in Ceylon, caste or varg could be made out by one's family name. In the same caste, there were higher and lower grades. Throughout the British period, the so-called out-castes (the Chandals now called the Rodiyas) continued to be a characteristic of Ceylonese society.

The practice of out-casting those who had

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1. Wijesekera: op. cit. p.60.
2. Ibid.

offended against the social code seems to have been in existence from olden times. That there were outcastes as far back as in the time of King Duttu Gemunu (101-77 B.C.) is proved by the story of his son who had to renounce the throne on his taking a Chandala wife[1]. The Mahavamsa refers to her as Asokamala Devi but the 'Devi' was evidently a mere courtesy appellation given by the chronicler to the young woman who was able to persuade the heir to the throne to forsake his kingdom for her sake[2]. The early chronicles refer to these outcastes as Chandalas. There is a reference to the punishment inflicted by the King upon a powerful clan who went by the name of the 'Long-Eared', Lambakanna (that is, with distended ear-lobes, as shown in the statues of the Buddha and in the statue of Maha Parakrama Bahu). Whether those belonging to that clan had naturally long ear holes, or whether their ear lobes were distended, as is done in Malabar and other parts of India to this day, one cannot say. However, it is recorded that King Banaga (A.D.95-101) set certain members of this clan to make a road to the Maha Stapa and 'set Chandalas to be their overseers'[3]. There is yet another historical reference to Chandalas as hired labourers[4].

There is no record to show how the term Chandala gave place to Rodiya; but various explanations have been

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1. J.R.A.S. Vol.XXXI. No.83.
2. Perera, E.W. Sinhalese Names, Plans and Titles.
3. Barnett, L.D: Guide to Sinhalese Folk-Lore. Chap.2.
4. The Indo-Ceylon Problem. MSS. No.611. National Archives of Ceylon.

given of the term Rodiya. In the Janawamsan (History of the Race) said to be written in the 15th century by a monk the following definitions have been given :

> " People who weave nooses and ropes are called 'Rodi'. The reason for it is this: At the beginning, being addicted to things which it was unlawful to do, because of incurable diseases such as udumbara and the like, and leprosy and the like, men and women staying in rock caves and tree hollows in the forest, abandoned by their relations, living there a long time, eating yams and fruits, by the power of their former merits, the disease being a little abated, and their beards and whiskers increased, their waist-cloths being soiled, plaiting rags of cloth, they begged and lived in villages and 'tribute villages'. Being thus disfigured, losing the Brahmana appearance, they lived unclean. Therefore loathing them, and calling them Roda-adikaya (sufferer from serious diseases), adharmishtaya (he who leads a bad life), being people who were cast off by their relations and repudiated, having no villages, houses, or gardens, being unable to gain existence, living at the root of trees and under watch huts, staying in the jungle, cutting bark, making leather, being accustomed to plait nooses and ropes, sitting at the entrance of the village, plaiting nooses, ropes and strings, they existed. Therefore as time went on taking the name Roga (disease) and the name Dhedi (obstinate; also meaning hard-hearted), combining them, the name Rodi was made. Thus obtaining a name of disease, from bodily deformity, though separated by name they are a Sudra division of the Grahapati that belongs to the Brahman caste". (1).

Other explanations have sought to connect the word Rodi to the Pali terms 'Ludda' and 'Rudda', both meaning a huntsman. Whatever the origin of the word may be, the Rodiyas, by the fact that their clan consisted of many who had been of noble birth, have exerted a fascination on the rest of the community [2]. Throughout the British

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1. Hugh Nevill. The Taprobanian. Quoted by Dr. Raghavan in his monograph, the Cultural Anthropology of the Rodiyas. pp.221-222.
2. Williams, H. op. cit. pp.307-308.

period, they were feared and occult powers were associated with them. This meant that people dreaded their touch lest they should become out-castes themselves. When they came for alms, children were instructed to throw the rice into their bag, taking care not to touch them or their bag or pot. In the 19th century, custom prohibited them from covering the upper parts of their bodies. About the beginning of the 20th century, the Rodiya women took to covering their breasts by means of a handkerchief with ends knotted at the back of the neck. Gradually, they began to dress like the rest of the people[1]. But even today they can be easily distinguished. Their number, of course, has fallen and according to the census of 1946 there were 2,000 Rodiyas in the whole island. It was generally felt that there were a large number of Rodiyas in Ceylon. The reason for this was the large number of photographs of so-called Rodiyas sold by many photographic firms in Ceylon until 1947. These firms "hire some slum slut with heavy, hanging breasts, bared, to pose for photographs - usually the woman is placed against a door the top panel of which she holds with up-stretched arms - and then these photographs are sold to tourists, as those of Rodiya Women"[2]. This practice came to be discontinued after 1949 by an Act of the Ceylon Legislature.

Finally, it may be mentioned that throughout the colonial period, the caste system had its impact on Ceylon's

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1. Ibid. p.396.
2. Vijayatunga. op. cit. p.210.

politics. It was an element that nobody conducting an election campaign could ignore. Referring to the elections of 1931, Sir John Kotelawala, in his memoirs writes:

> " At one extreme were those who regarded themselves as the cream of Sinhalese aristocracy, and at the other were what were known as the depressed classes, acutely conscious of their disabilities. It was a candidate's business to woo both, and many other gradations in the caste system in between. He had to exercise the greatest tact, and refrain from doing or saying anything that would outrage traditional customs. He had to pander to popular prejudices while pretending not to do so. It was an admirable training in dieplomacy at a pretty low level. One amusing incident is vivid in my memory. A Kandyan chieftain of the old feudalist school was discussing the election with me and some of my supporters. He was extremely pompous, and wherever and whenever he carried on a conversation he had with him a very youthful retainer who crouched beside him, and whose business it was to endorse everything his master said with an abjectly humble affirmative. By way of contrast, I had with me at the same time an influential representative of a caste considered to be fairly low down in the scale. It was very important to keep the two apart. But, by an unfortunate accident, they found themselves sitting at the same table to enjoy my hospitality.
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> The haughty Kandyan asked the so-called low-caste man from where he came. Instead of saying he came from Colombo, where he lived and worked at that time, he named his ancestral village, Talampitiya, where the caste to which most of the inhabitants belonged was only too well known. My Kandyan supporter was infuriated. What ? Had he actually eaten the same food, at the same table, as a man so degradingly low in the social scale ? It was positively disgusting, and he felt I, as host, had insulted him grossly. He stood up in a rage, rushed out to the garden, made terrible noises, and actually forced himself to vomit the food that had defiled him. It was a frightening predicament for me, who during that election time was wooing both sections; the one represented by the angry Chief, the other by the man whose presence had upset the vomiting guest. I hurried first to the garden and explained that if the old chief and those who thought like him wanted a representative to hold the scales evenly,

I was the man to be returned to the State Council. Back into the house I went and made the same plea to my other disgusted guest. Both sections supported me at the election". (1).

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MARRIAGE, SEX AND FAMILY LIFE.

Just as the family has been the biological unit in the Indian social organism, it is also the social unit of the Sinhalese national organism. A study of Ceylon's social organisation from 1900 to 1947 will clearly establish that the basic elements of it are, both in theory and practice, the same as in India. Marriage is decided not so much with the consent of the couple, as by their parents. This, of course, does not apply to the educated people. The village romance is a common story in both countries, and it begins around the village well or in the temple grounds - these being the spots not prohibited to women. For the rest, the young girls were not permitted to venture out of homes. Paternal disapproval ends many romances. The Dowry system was a common feature. After 1947, both countries officially tried to discourage it with practically similar results[2]. Considerations of wealth, position and family are deciding factors in marriage alliances. Until recently, both Polygamy and Polyandry prevailed as recognised custom[3]. It was after 1910 that they were discouraged positively both by public opinion

1. An Asian Prime Minister's Story. pp.25-26.
2. In India, the anti-dowry legislation was passed in 1962. In Ceylon, the law was discussed but could not be passed.
3. They were banned by law in 1948.

as well as by the government. Inspite of the law, the lower castes of the Sinhalese practise polyandry on a large scale. As among the Indian hill tribes (even among the Santhals, Baurias and hill tribes of Jaunsar) all the brothers of the bridegroom expect to enjoy full marrital rights with the new wife, thus complicating the system of inheritance[1]. There have been two forms of marriages in Ceylon - the _Diga_ and _Binna_[2]. The commoner type is the Diga where the girl is given away in the marriage. The Binna type, where the man comes to settle in the home of the bride, has attached to it many obligations and was a necessary outcome of the social needs for the management of property. In the low country, the Binna form of marriage was held in contempt as a shameful action, which no respectable young man would tolerate, since the position of the man becomes subordinate to that of the woman. The Binna husband is supposed to have very little hold over his spouse. If she does not like him, she can even send him home and divorce him. By so doing, she loses nothing, for as a Binna wife she retains the right of inheritance to the possessions of her own family. Marriage in Diga, however, is a more serious matter for the wife and is a more binding form of matrimony. She loses her own inheritance but has the right to a share in her husband's

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1. This makes the Sinhalese "one of the most litiguous races on the earth's surface". Williams,H. op. cit. p.309.
2. Davy, John: An Account of the Interior of Ceylon. p.41.

patrimony[1]. In 1945, Mr. Wijesekera wrote that: "the majority of married couples dislike living at the parental home in any way dependant on the parents or the men or women"[2]. On the eve of Independence, therefore, the tendency was to establish a separate home, if not immediately atleast after the first arrival. As in India, the marriage brokers in Ceylon continue to play a very important part[3]. He has always been a businessman bent on making money from both parties. He attributes qualities and virtues to both the families which probably they do not possess. After comparing the horoscope and discussing the dowry, he arranges the first visit. While the bridegroom is aware of it, the girl remains ignorant till the last day. Servants are dressed up for the occasion and special food is prepared. Mr. Wijesekera graphically describes a typical ceremony as follows :

> " As a rule the bridegroom and party consisting of his father, uncles, and brothers visit in the afternoon. When no well-to-do relatives are available friends of good position accompany the party. The visitors and inmates sit in the verandah until at times everyone's patience is exhausted. The appearance of the girl is a gradual process. Then the visitors are taken in. Through doors and windows the female inmates peep on. After much delay the girl steps into the midst of the gathering and is introduced to the visitors by the father, mother or uncle. Pale with excitement uneasily she sits not in her natural ease or beauty but in an assumed pose. She talks hardly a word. The general trend of the conversation deals with the weather and general topics of the locality. Still the girl waits embarrassed

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1. Williams, H: Ceylon. pp.308-309.
2. The People of Ceylon. Chapter VI.
3. Williams, H: op. cit. p.308.

and uneasy. The ordeal is not yet over. Light refreshments begin to appear in the drawing room or the party is conducted to a table laden with refreshments. From now on action quickens. After tea the party leaves with formal courtesies. The ordeal is over and the girl heaves a sigh of relief. No finality can be reached until various details of dowry are settled between the parties concerned. Much bargaining is resorted to almost to breaking point. In all these long-winding discussions and detailed examination of specific problems the girl is never asked her views, likes and dislikes. Even if she dislikes she has to accept the man of parental choice." (1)

It is the astrologer who determines the date of the marriage. As in a typical Hindu marriage relatives look for an opportunity to create trouble, so complications are often created in Ceylon also[2]. Quite often expenditure in marriage is beyond the capacity of the parties concerned[3]. The tragedy in both countries is that it is the poorer folk who spend lavishly and beyond their means, with the result that properties are often mortgaged and loans are raised with a view to out-doing so and so[4]. The period following a marriage is, therefore, one of great hardship for the parties concerned and their relations and friends. In the villages, immediately after marriage there is an indecent ceremony called as the <u>salubeleema</u> (examination of the cloth conducted by the mother-in-law). This ceremony confirms the virginity of a Sinhala bride[5]. This is common both among the Tamils as well as the Sinhalese[6]. The educated people of course, have given it up and they go on what is called a honey-moon.

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1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. Ludowyk, E.F.C. Story of Ceylon. p.53.
4. Ibid. p.85.
5. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.69.
6. Thurston, Edgar: Castes and Tribes of South India. Vol. 5. p.45.

The first conception is awaited with considerable keenness; and if within the first couple of months the girl has not conceived, many constructions are put on the delay, and parents feel a little alarmed. Generally, therefore, the first child is born within the first year or so. A son is always preferred to a daughter, and if this desire is fulfilled, special worship is offered at a specified devale. A daughter is considered a liability. This is due to the dowry system; there is also the fear and the worry because of the high premium on virginity. The parents are worried lest their daughters after marriage disappoint the husband and thereby earn a bad name for them. At the time of delivery, the village mid-wife is summoned; she is an experienced matron without any medical training whatsoever. In the cities the maternity cases are taken to the Nursing Homes and hospitals. The exact time of birth is recorded for purposes of casting the horoscope [1]. The baby is given a bath as in India; the room is disinfected by burning castor oil, camphor and other things; the mother and the child are kept indoors for a period of 10 or 14 days, after which both are taken to the temple or devale. The anna-prashan ceremony common in India is also performed in Ceylon [2]; what name the child should bear is prescribed by an astrologer. The educated people announce the names of their children at the time of registration. Until 1940, corrupted forms of European first names (George, Peter, Oliver

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1. Wijesekera, op. cit. Chapter VII.
2. Ibid.

etc.) were quite popular. As freedom began to draw nearer, the older Sinhalese names became quite popular. Indian names continued to have their attraction throughout this period[1].

Babies are seldom given animal milk or processed food, and the mother continues to feed the baby as long as she is physically able to do so. It used to be a most touching sight, and a common one at that, to witness a mother feeding a baby on the road side, quite unconcerned with the world around. She fed the child whenever it cried and not according to any system. This is true even today. The education of the child is rather perfunctory. A village elder or the temple priest acts as the teacher; in some cases the father imparts the first instruction. After 1931, schooling became compulsory under government regulations[2]. The age of attaining puberty is about 12 for boys and 13 for girls. The change in the physiological status is passed over without any notice in the case of boys, but in the case of girls, it is a landmark affecting her whole future and behaviour in society. Most of the rituals associated with the first mensturation in India are observed in Ceylon. The general attitude towards life in Ceylon is fatalistic. Illness is considered as the result of evil spirit, curses or bad Karmas (deeds). A system of medical treatment based on prohibition and restrictions prevailed. The Ayurved system has been practised in Ceylon

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1. G.C.Mendis. op. cit. p.30.
2. Sessional Paper XVII. Colombo. 1962. pp.20-21.

for a long time, and after 1947 it began to receive positive encouragement from the government [1]. It is a living system in Ceylon, practised by men with the healers' touch and patronized by a far larger number than those who prefer the Allopathic system [2]. During the colonial period this system was relegated to the background because of the lack of interest shown by the rulers [3]. No research or scientific study of it has been undertaken. Those who believe in superstition (and their number is fairly large) practise magic and seek most complicated remedies. Divine intervention is prayed for by the offering of vows to particular deities of the devales. Most Ceylonese believe in transmigration [4]. On passing away from this human existence, the individual is either reincarnated in another form, or remains in suspended animation to be reborn. A sick person is immediately suspect and is placed in a room with his head to the east for safety. If he dies despite the efforts of the Kapuralla and the sacrifice of a cock, the head is turned to the west and the corpse arrayed in all the finery that its earthly wardrobe permits. Every death is surrounded with superstitutious ceremonials. Usually the dead bodies are not disposed of on Fridays and Tuesdays. If the morrow happens to be a Tuesday or Friday, the dead body is preserved until the day after with the help of vinegar and salt. As in India the cot used by the deceased is put

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1. Ceylon Daily News. p.6. March 15, 1963.
2. In 1962, a Research Institute for Ayurveda was set up at Navinna and it was opened by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru.
3. Ceylon Daily News. op. cit. p.6.
4. Wijesekera. op. cit. Chapter VII.

upside down. Candles are lit in the room where the dead body is kept and the females keep on wailing and screaming. All the relatives are immediately informed and every one talks only about the good qualities of the deceased. The funeral procession is preceded by music in plaintive tune. A special pyre of wood is erected for cremating the dead body. In cremations, a grandson, a son, a nephew or a son-in-law sets fire to the pyre after walking three times around it. Some people bury their dead. Priests and vellalas (family purohits) are cremated, presumably in imitation of the Goyigamas that all Sinhalese admit to be their superior in caste. Others are all buried head to the west[1]. The last religious rites are performed by priests in a ceremony called pansukula pinkama in which a sermon is delivered on death and the impermanence of life. On the sixty day after the death a Bhikku is invited to deliver a short sermon to the household, and on the seventh day large numbers of Bhikus are treated to a mid-day meal. The Tamils practise most of the customs associated with Hinduism practised in South India.

Sinhalese folk-lore has preserved considerable information for reconstructing an outline of the traits of the sexual life of the Sinhalese. Sex suppression is one of the characteristics in the emotional evolution of a child both in India and Ceylon. Most thoughts and actions which are repressed find expressions in dreams and play;

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1. Williams, H: Ceylon. p.309.

many emotions find an outlet in secret. After 1920 the development of education, the growth of schools, general reading, and the Cinema have contributed to the acquisition of knowledge about sex matters. As in a typical Indian College hostel or in a University residential unit, so in Ceylon's boarding houses one can find sexual thought expressed secretly by drawing on walls all kinds of figures[1]. These imaginary pictures are useful in interpreting the inhibited sex emotions of the young people. Sometimes an inscription graphically narrates the actual thought that arose in the mind. When so much has been and can be expressed, even under strictly inhibited conditions imposed by a close society like that of India or Ceylon, how much of an active force sex is in the life of an individual is not difficult to imagine. Leaving out the educated sections, the Ceylonese society provides no occasion for supplying sexual satisfaction to its members. As in India men and women are not allowed free association. The customs are extremely strict about virginity. Eugenics is beyond reach even of the educated people. Between 1900 and 1947, contraceptive methods were largely unknown,

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1. In the Halls of Residence of the Peradeniya University some students walked from their rooms to the bath rooms after removing their clothes. And if someone went to the same bathroom, they remain nude and talk. Two or three students can bathe naked in the same bath room. This was explained to me in terms of modernization.

unheard of and they remained unused[2]. Women hardly participated either in dancing or in dramas; these were the close preserves of men[1]. As in India, so in Ceylon, even the film was looked down upon as a bad career for women[2]. In some of the hill stations of Ceylon, during the colonial period, motels came into existence and they continue even today. These are places which are often visited by educated people. This is refined prostitution. In the rural areas, the system of prostitution functioned. Whatever one might say about colour, most people in the world are colour conscious in so far as a distinct admiration and preference prevails for fair complexion in the selection of a partner. Ceylon is no exception, but

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1. The Report of the Film Enquiry Committee 1951 (India) has given this explanation: "During what is called as the Hindu period of Indian history, providing entertainment for the public was one of the responsibilities of the King. He was the patron of all artistes who sought to entertain the public, whether the entertainment itself had any pretensions to art or not. No festival was complete without a play, a dance or a musical recital which enjoyed royal patronage and which the public could witness. Later, partly under the influence of puritanical trends manifested in religious thought that spread in the East or of sects which captured the West, and partly under the stress and strain of medieval struggle for survival among the State, the value of social functions of an artistic or entertaining type received lesser attention or patronage from the Kings. In India, under alien rule this tendency was accentuated and cultural entertainment which was once part of family or community activities shrank into a profession, confined to, cultivated and preserved by, those who were debarred from respectable society. The film, owing to its close association with the arts of music, dance and histrionics has also suffered from the prejudices engendered by these historical and social influences". Para 127. p.41. This is also true of Ceylon. See Devar Surya Sena: Sinhalese Music. Pageant of Lanka Souvenir. 1948.
2. Wickremasinghe: op. cit. p.130.

this is definitely a sexual complex and need not be confused with a racial prejudice similar to a colour bar. The standards of beauty are common in the two countries of India and Ceylon. But as we stated earlier, marriage in Ceylon for a large majority of people does not rest on the concept of free choice; caste, social status, profession, wealth and dowry are the essential factors of a union. Atleast during the period covered by this dissertation, the education of girls remained quite unimportant [1]. Love marriages were rare and arranged marriages were the order of the day. One authority has thus described the emotional experience of an average bride in Ceylon :

> " Having little knowledge of sex the couple find themselves together in a strange relationship. Their feelings remain mixed with fear and happiness. The girl is frightened and goes through the night like a victim of sacrifice. And the man none the wiser resorts to brute force. The pain and fear lead to a nervous state in which love and innate bashfulness are at conflict. The first night is remembered by the majority who remain virgins up to that night. The fact has to be proved by showing the blood-stained sheet of the bridal bed to the mother of the bridegroom. After the excitement of the first night mating becomes a matter of course and annually an addition to the family arrives. The posture of mating is the natural one. Anything novel or out of the ordinary positions being regarded as indecent and vulgar". (2).

It may also be mentioned that in the matter of sexual gratification, the wife is entirely dependent on the will and pleasure of the husband [3]. The obvious result of this

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1. See Sessional Paper XVII. Colombo. p.24.
2. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.81.
3. Ibid. p.82.

has been large families.

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FOOD HABITS, DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The food habits of the Ceylon people with one or two important exceptions closely resemble those of the people of South India. Rice forms the staple food; a sambol[1] dish or a polhodi[2] is quite popular. Sweet potatoes are boiled and taken with scraped coconut. Some people take hoppers[3], Dosa[4] and Pittu[5]. Tea is commonly taken; and coffee is preferred by the older people; coconut milk is liked by some people; the mid-day meal consists of rice, a vegetable or two, fish, or meat. The surprising thing in Ceylon is the large consumption of beef. It is explained that beef was made popular in Ceylon by the British people, but there is no evidence to prove this. The educated people and the rich classes take milk and consume butter. The evening meals also contain rice supplemented by curries. Mangoes, Papayas (in Hindi Papita), bananas and oranges are very popular. Certain foods are taboo. For example, meat and fish should not be taken at the same meal. As in India, the average people

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1. The Sambol is a hot dish made by grinding together chillies, onions, salt, maldive fish, scraped coconut, and lemon juice.
2. Polhodi is light soup made with coconut milk cooked with a few condiments.
3. Hopper is a baked cake made of rice flour and coconut milk.
4. Dosa is boiled rice cake. Sometimes it is fried.
5. Pittu is made by mixing ground-flour and scraped coconut steam cooked.

divide food into two categories: the heat-producing and the cooling. For example, a peasant mother in Ceylon will not like her children eating stale rice and curds, drinking coconut milk and bathing on the same day, since all these are believed to be frightfully cooling. Although there are some Portuguese and Dutch dishes, most of the dishes are of South Indian origin. Except in the educated families, men and women seldom eat together. It is usual to feed the children and the men first; the women eat last. Most people eat squatting as in India. If there is no guest present, the wife after serving the husband and children may serve herself and the whole family dines together. But if there are guests, she will practically retire to the back room, after having served the men in the verandah, and have her meal afterwards. A faithful and devoted wife will rather go hungry than eat before her husband. Certain vegetables and fruits are also prescribed for their special values to the human system. This is a feature common to both India and Ceylon, and the explanation for this appears to be that in the absence of adequate medical facilities practically everything functions in the service of medical treatment.

Just as the food habits of the Ceylonese bear a close resemblance with the food habits of people in South India, there is not much difference in the dress of the two countries. The children in the country-side upto the age of 7 years wear practically nothing when at home. At the age of about 9 or 10, they begin to wear a piece of

coloured cloth from the waist down to the knees, when at home. When they go out of doors, the boys wear an upper garment such as a coat or a shirt and the girls a blouse or a jacket. The young men put on a sarong, a shirt and coat, and the women a camboy and a jacket, leaving bare an inch or two of the body between the lower and the upper garment. Each class of society has a dress characteristic of that class. Until 1947, there were differences between the up country and the low country forms of dress [1]. This might have been due to the conservatism of the up country folk who were little affected by foreign modes. The impact of the British rule made the trousers very popular. The educated women took to the Indian Sari. Those educated women who are more forward than the rest wear short frocks and European underwear. When engaged in labour of any description, the Sinhalese males work almost bare-bodied save for a span cloth, which is worn on a belt tied around the waist [2]. This they have taken from the Tamils [3]. This is a common sight throughout South India. A part of the cloth hangs frontally whilst the other end is passed between the legs and tucked on to the waist line behind. It is an uncouth and undignified dress which barely hides one's nudity. The men of South Ceylon are averse to this form of dress for work. They tuck up the sarong or cloth as it is worn by

1. de Silva: "The Dress in Ceylon". Ceylon Daily News. August 3, 1948.
2. This is a common sight even today.
3. Thurstan Edgar: op. cit. p.89.

them. The women usually work in cloth and blouse. Sometimes in the villages the women use a large handkerchief as an upper garment. One end is tied round the neck and the other is tucked inside the cloth at the hips. Ample freedom of movement of the upper part of the body is thereby obtained. The outcaste women wear this form of upper dress. The men bathe in their work dress whilst the women wear a one-piece cloth from the breast up to the knee[1]. When visiting, both sexes wear their best.

The ornaments of the Ceylonese include finger rings and ear rings, anklets, bracelets, hair pins, necklaces and bangles. Most young girls are extremely fond of ornaments. Silver and gold are the most popular metals. While the Tamil girls get their ears and noses pierced, the Sinhalese girls pierce only the ears but not the nose. Jewellery is handed down in families in female succession, and as in India it is considered Stridhan. A sentimental attachment grows up to ornaments and a woman would rather starve or suffer than part with a piece of family jewellery. The knotting of hair is done in the same manner as in South India. Dark wavy long hair is considered a sign of beauty. Coconut oil is applied to facilitate combing and to add to the shine. Filing of teeth is another attempt at improving one's looks. Educated girls paint their nails and tint their lips. It is, of course, different with the village women. Some people tattoo their bodies with many a beautiful

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1. Williams, H: op. cit. p.295.

symbol or pattern. People in Ceylon bathe almost regularly, and early morning is preferred to any other time of the day. Cleaning of the teeth is done with a Neem twig[1]; the more sophisticated people, of course, use tooth brush. Boiled lemon is used for washing of the hair. Orthodox people avoid taking baths on Fridays and Tuesdays. After taking meals the mouth is usually washed, as it is before meals; water is also used for ablutions, the left hand being used in this operation. Some use toilet paper in addition but all use water. Just as in India people generally would not sleep with their feet towards the North or South, in Ceylon also the body must be from east to west, for in the south lives Yama, God of Death[1], Hindu Lord of Hell, while in the north is the abode of demons[2].

An age-old habit of the people in Ceylon is the chewing of betel and tobacco. This is indulged in to such an extent that often a black coating is left on the teeth. As often happens in India, the trail of the betel chewer is left on everything he or she passes such as walls of buildings, pillars, posts, and vehicles. The king and peasant chewed betel and a betel culture grew up as an elaborate complex of a number of vessels and processes. Alcoholic beverages are obtained by fermenting the juice extracted from the flower of the kital, coconut, or palmyra palm. This is known as toddy which when distilled produces a spirituous liquor called arrack. The Government has the

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1. Vijayatunga. p.234.
2. Williams, H. op. cit. p.297.

monopoly of distilling arrack but the local process of distilling arrack is resorted to although it is considered illegal. Many varieties of foreign liquor are imported and consumed, the most popular being beer, gin, whisky and champagne [1]. Narcotics cannot be left out of the picture since some of the Sinhalese are addicted to them. Opium used to be sold freely but its import has been stopped since 1946; now it is smuggled in from India and a big underworld trade is carried on. Opium is taken both by men and women who find in the drug a temporary remedy against mental and physical pain. Ganja, legiyam, hashish and other varieties of narcotics are also used by men. Quite often Jaffna cheroot is smoked.

§ 6

TOOLS AND INSTRUMENTS

With regard to the domestic utensils used in Ceylon, it may be stated that the people use coconut shells for a variety of purposes as in South India [2]. Coconut shell spoons are used both by the rich and the poor. Baskets are made of reeds or cane. With the advent of Europeans and the intrusion made by the foreign markets, new fashions made their inroad. Heavy competition, after 1900, tended to drive out the local made objects, and Japan overran the market, even driving out the articles of European origin and

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1. The educated classes consume beer almost like water.
2. Wijesekera: Sinhalese Pottery. Ceylon Today. Vol.II. No.2. 1953.

design[1]. The electric torch became an article of common use. Meals are usually cooked in the kitchen so as not to be seen by outsiders who might cast a greedy look. Clay vessels are often used; and wood is used for cooking. Ceylon had an ancient craft of pottery production[2]. After 1900, overwhelming competition due to the import of superior South Indian products, the exploitation of the inexperience of the average potter, and the lack of an adequate supply of clay contributed to the deterioration of the craft[3]. It was only after 1947 that the Government of Ceylon realised that the craft was dying and took steps to revive it[4]. In 1947 restrictions were placed on the import of Indian pottery which, in 1949, culminated in a total prohibition[5]. But the noteworthy feature is that most of the designs even today are of Indian origin[6]. As in India, the firing of the pots is done on the bare open ground when enough pots have accumulated. Several hundred pieces are fired at once and mass firing is done because of the difficulty in accumulating enough dry fuel[7]. For fuel, wood is used least often because of the expense, but readily available (and stored for that purpose) are dried coconut husk or shell, coconut palm leaf stalk, or dried cow dung. The pots are placed regularly interspersed with fuel in a large mound. The whole mass is then covered with three fifteen-pound bundles of straw and then a thin layer of clay and

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1. Elliot: The Real Ceylon. p.91.
2. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.39.
3. Ibid. p.40.
4. Bulletin of The Institute of Traditional Cultures. Madras. Part I. 1966. p.160.
5. Ibid. p.161.
6. Ibid. p.161.
7. Ibid. p.162.

broken shards (broken pottery) to retain the neat. During the firing more fuel is inserted in the spaces between the pots below the pile. The technique for creating blackware is exactly the same as in South India[1]. In fact this technique was learnt from those people who went from South India to Ceylon early in the twentieth century. At the end of a firing in which the whole load is intended to be black, coconut husk which is in a green undried state is inserted into the fire. Quantity of smoke results which is heavy in carbon which is then deposited on the pot. In this primitive manner, a reducing atmosphere is created by the simple expedient of cutting down the oxygen supply through the wetness of the fuel. A frequent surface refinement is accomplished by polishing the pot with a smooth shell while it revolves on the wheel when leather hard. This compresses the surface, makes it compact and light reflecting and these qualities are retained after the firing[2].

In the first chapter we have already described in detail the pattern of agriculture in Ceylon, and we brought out the close similarity between it and the pattern of agriculture in India. The same is true of the agricultural implements and tools. Oil presses, looms, pumps, the wheel and the plough are among the chief mechanical instruments aiding production. The plough was the common means of

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1. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.41.
2. Art in Industry. Vol. VI. No. 3. Madras. p.45.

facilitating agriculture and was known from very ancient times[1]. Majority of people carrying on intensive cultivation resorted to the plough as a labour-saving device; at the same time buffaloes and bulls could be employed to assist. The looms are of a very primitive type where the operator has to sit on the floor or in a pit. For drawing water from deep wells, a traditional Indian device is used in Ceylon. This is the lever worked on the principle of the balance. A beam is centrally pivoted on a vertical post. A weight is tied at one end the vessel is hung to the other by a rope[2].

Among a variety of ways of obtaining oil the Ceylonese use the pressure principle in its extraction. Two planks are pressed together with oil seeds placed between. Gradually the pressure is increased until no more oil can be extracted[3]. Nuts and large seeds are crushed by this process. The special machine for extracting the oil from coconut is called the <u>cheku</u>.[4] A stone or wooden mortar is planted very firmly on the ground allowing a short neck at the bottom to appear above ground. A pestle of wood is placed in the mortar. A pair of bulls or a man carries the yoke around the mortar and the mortar is mechanically worked by being attached to the horizontal yoke which in turn goes around the neck of the cheku. The oil is squeezed out through the opening at the bottom of

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1. Lewis, J.P.-J.R.A.S.,No.29-1884. Contains an account of the Sinhalese plough which closely resembles the Indian plough.
2. Wijesekera: The People of Ceylon. Chapter XI.
3. Ibid. p.97.
4. Ibid. p.98. In Hindi, <u>Kolhu</u>.

the chekku on one side. When all the oil has been squeezed out, a refill is introduced after removing the oil cakes (poonac) which serve as animal food[1]. This process enables a large quantity of oil to be squeezed out quickly giving at the same time a marketable by-product. But the villagers prefer hand extracted coconut oil. From very ancient times the wheel was known to the Sinhalese and they also have put it to a number of uses. Even today the villager employs it in transport for carts, in pottery making, and in carpentry. The principle of the wheel was not only a labour-saving device, it also helped to expedite the work and at the same time added beauty and symmetry of form in the final product.

$ 7

BELIEFS AND SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

In order to have a fuller understanding of the impact of Indian culture on the people of Ceylon, it is necessary to understand the beliefs and social philosophy of Ceylon. The word for taboo is Kili[2]. In all its applications, its usage implies a magico-social sanction against the object or person that is tabooed, in so far as it has to be avoided by presence or touch. Kili signifies that even casual contact with the kilied person or thing is fraught with grave danger. Many a taboo centres around the idea of blood. As in India people in

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1. Ibid. p.99. In Hindi "Khal" or "Khali".
2. It is a Sinhalese word which means "to be polluted".

Ceylon observe a certain continence in their marital relations. Certain days and periods are avoided as unclean by custom, necessitating the avoidance of sexual intercourse during menstruation and the last stages of pregnancy. The Buddhists have added to this list the days of the four quarters of the moon[1]. During certain periods of a woman's life she is expected to abstain from certain foods and avoid certain places, so that she may not be affected by the evil influences of spirits. The taboo in the case of the first menstruation is observed with much greater strictness in Ceylon than in the case of India. In Ceylon, the young girl is at once secluded in a room and only females are allowed to see her. She is never left alone for one single moment, as she is most susceptible to danger from the evil influences of spirits and demons. The washer-woman is summoned and she supplies her a change of clothes daily[2]. An auspicious moment and a day are fixed up after consulting an astrologer (who also predicts her future) when the washer-woman bathes her at dawn with due ritual and ushers her out. The entire village comes to know of the event because of the playing on the _Rabana_. From this time onwards she is considered a woman and the parents plan to arrange her marriage[3].

In fact there are two special _kilis_ associated with women - one is connected with menstruation (magul

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1. Walpola Rahula: History of Buddhism in Ceylon, p.79. Also see Williams,H: Ceylon, p.301. They are called "Poja days".
2. Keble. op. cit. Chapter VII.
3. Wijesekera, N.D. op. cit. Chapter XVI.

killa) and the other with birth (wedum killa). Both are associated with blood. The supposed period of prohibition lasts so long as the outflow of blood lasts. The violation of taboo during this period is to invite disaster; the woman has to be protected and the best way of doing so is to isolate her. The woman remains indoors after delivery for a period of 14 days although, in theory, the duration of the taboo is three months[1].

Diseases of a contagious nature, such as plagues and epidemics, are another source of possible danger and so they are tabooed. Just as chicken-pox and small-pox are associated with "mata" or "Mai" in India, they are attributed to as many as seven mothers in the case of Ceylon. It is a killi to visit such patients or even the village where such patients reside. Surprisingly the application of the taboo, both in India and in Ceylon, embodies the germ of the modern conception of segregating the patient in such cases. The primitive man's health regulations for the good of the community may have given birth to the principle of killi. In its observance the fear of violation is greater than any legal order, since the application is bilateral and the evil results may affect both parties[2].

In the economic sphere also, taboo is practised in Ceylon quite as much as in India. Special precautions are taken at the harvest. The popular belief is that the

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1. Ibid. pp. 150 ff.
2. J.R.A.S. Vol.XXX. No.79. p.180.

polowa Bihiraya (Earth guardians) are in charge of grain, being responsible for their hoarding and just distribution. A woman in her menses is forbidden to enter the fields. Stories about the dire consequences of the presence of such a woman are current throughout the Island. One such story was narrated to me. It is said that farmers obtained all their tools at the mouth of a cave, called Vastugala[1]. But on the day following the visit of a woman in her periods to the cave, all the tools were withdrawn by some unknown power and were never found again. Taboo also applies to marriages among close blood relations, although under the impact of Western rule some of the rich educated people permitted such unions with a view to preserving wealth and property within the same family[2]. The principle of taboo is extended to food as in India. Certain foods are prohibited to woman during certain periods of life. It is considered as ominous to take fish and meat at the same meal. This is obviously an adjustment for food conservation. There is also another interesting belief popularly held, which prohibits the eating of the flesh of creatures whose name ends in "ran", for example, uran, maguran, and moran[3].

Just as in India, even the educated people believe in what is called <u>Shubh Lagna</u> or <u>Ashubh</u>. A similar distinction is made in Ceylon also. There are lucky omens as well as unlucky. As we stated earlier,

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1. Near Galle.
2. Sagotra marriages have become a common occurence in India.
3. The People of Ceylon. p.150.

Tuesdays and Fridays are considered bad days for disposing of the dead and for bathing. Mr. Wijesekera has compiled a list of auspicious sights before the commencement of a journey. The list was made in 1934 and makes interesting reading :

> " Watch for what is even more auspicious than the asterism itself the signs at the beginning of your journey, namely, the gentle fragrant breeze, fully laden jars, peacocks, sweet mangoes, full-blown white blossoms, sweetly speaking maidens, golden urns, waving white chowries, white parasols and infuriated lordly elephants"(1).

Before starting any important work the astrologer is usually consulted to prescribe an auspicious hour. These beliefs are closely connected with the doctrine of Karma. People, both in India and Ceylon, consider death as the culmination of the human worldly cycle; another world is postulated where people are reborn according to their deeds or Karma. Such a world may be happy or unhappy, and may be Mrityu Loka, Pitra Loka, Deva Loka or Swarg. In Ceylon, the term for the Deva Loka is Vimana Vasthu and that for Pitra Loka is Peta Vasthu[2]. What specific Karmas will lead to which Loka or world is a theme shrouded in mystery. But most people believe in it and no one worries about the truth.

In most traditional cultures, dreams play an important part. Just as in India there is a whole list of diverse interpretations of dreams, in Ceylon also people draw different inferences from what they experience in

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1. Ibid. p.152 of the Ramayana.
2. Pybus: Account of Mission to Kandy, 1762-1862. p.29.

the dream state. Good spirits are supposed to help a man through a dream; bad spirits are presumed to harm him. Even those who have been westernized and have risen to high positions in Ceylon's political life believe in the efficacy of dreams. An interesting story is mentioned by Sir John Kotelawala in his memoirs which may be mentioned in this connection. In 1952, when he was abroad, a document entitled "THE PREMIER STAKES" was published, whose authorship, to this day, remains controversial. The enemies of Sir John attributed this document to him. During his absence, in the United States, Premier Dudley Senanayake sent a message to Sir John, asking for his resignation. As soon as he got this message, he left the United States for Ceylon. On his way home, he stopped for a short while in Bombay and Trichinopoly. About his dream this is what he writes :

> " We boarded Air India's Dakota aircraft in the early hours of the morning, and stopped at Trichinopoly for lunch. Some of my friends in Ceylon had chartered an Air Academy aircraft, and sent a message to me in Trichinopoly asking me to return home in that aircraft. They also sent me various other bits of advice, promising me their assistance if I wanted to "do a Neguib" and start a revolution. I said that I was prepared for the worst, and if this was the treatment that was to be meted out to me if did not matter by what plane I travelled. And I was not planning any coup. I travelled on the scheduled service from Trichinopoly. On the last stage of my homeward flight I was so tired that I fell asleep in the plane and had a vivid dream in which D.S.Senanayake came to me and said that I was about to get into serious trouble, but I should be all right if I took the pill he offered me. I took the pill, and I woke up. I was greeted in Colombo like a hero by my friends and members of the public who had up to then shown no real interest in me and my politics"(1)

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1. Sir John Kotelawala: An Asian Prime Minister's Story.p.88.

Dreams in a modern society are interpreted as the interplay of active and dormant reminiscences of the sub-conscious mind. The Sinhalese fervently believe in dreams as omens of coming events. They are always interpreted as influencing the future. On the subject of dreams many recorded Mss. are extent[1]. These afford a dogmatic interpretation. Nevertheless the average peasant has acquired a fair knowledge of the interpretation of dreams as popularly understood. In such an understanding of dreams a general agreement on the main interpretation prevails. But points of difference arise as regards details. A variety of predisposing factors condition dreams. Some of them are under and some beyond human control. Specific remedies are supposed to eliminate certain classes of bad dreams[2].

The classification of dreams has been known from ancient times[3]. This very fact shows a stage of systematisation of the dream contents by a class analysis of the dreams experienced by a society which is different from the present. Therefore, that interpretation applies to a society which prevailed at the time of the classification. A section of the present day society still faithfully believes in these interpretations. Dreams may be good, bad or ineffective. The classes of dreams are sexual, demonological, ominous, informative and casual. Under the class of sexual dreams are included a number of natural dreams, resulting in the release of sexual impulse to a

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1. National Archives of Ceylon. Nuwara Eliya. MSS. Nos.210, 311, 475 and 594.
2. Mss. No.475.
3. Mss. No.210.

necessary physiological function. The actions are attributed to two spirits entitled Mohini, an elusive female phantom of beauty who seduces men in dreams, and Kolukumara, a handsome irrestible young prince who seduces women in dreams[1]. The persons affected by such dreams pine and waste away spending restless nights under the demonic spell. These visitations in dreams can be cured by resort to a set ritual.

Demons and other maleficent spirits may also inflict harm by appearing in dreams. Their influence, on the whole, induces illness. Prescribed remedies are[2] supposed to exist to ward off such visitations. The ominous dreams are portemtous of danger, misfortune and death. These evil happenings may be averted to a great extent if the dream is kept to oneself. Should it be given out then it must be first divulged under a lime tree after making a vow. Bad dreams may be generally averted by purity of body and mind. Informative dreams constitute the bulk of the dreams. These are mere wish fulfilments and human desires. Someone appears in a dream and tells a hunter where game is plentiful, gives a clue to a lost article, indicates hidden treasures, directs an undertaking, offers advice and hints about a future event. Dreams of a casual nature dealing with quite a number of miscellaneous subjects are in fact the result of a physical condition preceding the dream.

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1. Mss. No.311.
2. These are connected with bali and tovil to which we refer later in this chapter.

It is a common belief that certain facts and objects are rarely dreamt of. If one dreams of these, great good will be in store. The sun, moon, and stars fall within this category. Death, accidents, broken teeth or limbs spell disaster. The opposite of what has been dreamt may happen is also a popular belief[1]. It is always easy to find a set of events that may be correlated with the possible interpretation of a dream. Such a confirmation of the interpretation of a dream ensures the continuance of the firm belief in dreams. Fear and superstition strengthen the belief. A good dream infuses sufficient confidence stimulating action, as much as a bad dream dissuades and frustrates[2].

There is a general belief in ghosts and spirits. In India the general theory is that after the spirit has quitted the physical frame, it is not lost or dissipated but that it assumes other conditions. The first condition after separation of the spirit from the physical frame is the assumption of a subtle form known as the astral body[3]. The prejudices and predilections of the spirit in this body are more or less akin to those possessed by it during life. In shape and colour also the astral form resembles the original physical form. It would thus follow that the condition of disembodiedness does not liberate the spirit from that mental association which

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1. As in India tasting sweets in a dream is a portent of coming sickness. Yellow metal is considered ominous.
2. Wijesekera, op. cit. pp. 201-202.
3. Misra, Pandit Brahm Shankar: Discourses on Radhasoami Faith, Part I, pp.13 ff.

constitutes a source of pain. The causes which brought about the mental associations and the eventual assumption of the physical frame are not, therefore, eliminated by the spirit becoming merely disembodied. According to the canons of religion in India, the mundane prejudices and desires are the causes of the descent of the spirit into the physical world and of the assumption of the physical frame. Unless these causes are eradicated and, in lieu of them, communion is established with higher spiritual sources, the association with mind and matter will continue and the spirit will remain subject to mundane pains and pleasures. From these origins the theory of _Pitras_ has been built up according to Hindu metaphysics[1]. The disembodied spirit is in need of help to free itself from torments of pain. The series of _shradha_ ceremonies enjoined upon the near relatives of the deceased are all directed towards the one end of emancipating the spirit[2]. The regular alms giving during the weeks following a death are designed to achieve the same results. The social implications of these doctrines is, of course, the creation of a system in which the Brahmin class may stand to gain financially. In Ceylon, although a well-defined system of ancestral worship may not be apparent, "the traces of such elements may be suspected"[3]. The spirits are supposed to look after the family, help them in distress, and generally

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1. Pillai, G.K: Hindu Gods And Hidden Mysteries. Chap.10.
2. Along with _Karma_ several other theories about the fate of man after death came to be accepted. The _Shradha_ concept is related to the idea of transferrence of _Karma_. See Radha Krishnan. Indian Philosophy. Vol.I. p.508.
3. Spittel, R.L: Wild Ceylon. Chapter 2.

act in a beneficent manner in return for their good deeds. This explains the reason for soliciting consciously or unconsciously help from the dead parents. It is widely believed that the spirits are reborn in the same family. The result is a regular intercourse between the dead and the living. Both in India as well as in Ceylon the doctrine of Kula deva (family god) is widely prevalent[1]. Not only the family has a god, a village also has a deity of its own. On all important occasions, in both countries the village folk make offerings to these deities. In short, belief in spirits and ghosts is widely prevalent both in India and in Ceylon. The malecient spirits wandering in a state of suffering are supposed to be seeking reincarnation in a better world; but if they do not succeed, it is in this condition that they appear ghosts. The ghosts are considered dangerous entities who in various guises may haunt houses, roads, places, cremation grounds and cemeteries[2]. They show themselves in wierd shapes and forms and cause terror by making unearthly noises. One of the commonly accepted beliefs in Ceylon is that when a woman dies during child-birth with the child undelivered, she is reincarnated as a spirit that spends her time in uttering painful cries resembling those of a woman in labour. The disembodied spirit is called as Bodilima[3]. The Hunivan Yakshaya is a demoness who presents herself to lonely travellers in dark

1. Gokhale calls it the cult of ancestor worship. op. cit.
2. Percival Robert: An Account of the Island of Ceylon. p.190.
3. Williams, H: op. cit. pp.301-302.

nights. Mohini is a beautiful young maiden who appears in the dreams of young men and her continuous visits induce frequent night emissions. Kalukumara is a handsome young prince who appears in the dreams of young maidens; he is the counterpart of Mohini. Gopalu Yaka is another spirit who attempts to throw people out of their beds. In short, there are good and bad spirits. The Yakahyos are good ones and they live in all the waters. They are gentle and kind with a veneration for Buddha. The Rakshyos are bad ones and they inhabit the places where the bodies of the dead lie buried and in forests and groves. Each has his own particular tree from which he will leap out and seize the passerby, if given the chance. They also have a demon for every disease, a recognition of the fact that some positive agent - which we may label a germ - is responsible for sickness.

From a belief in ghosts, magic is only the next step. Simple amulets or talismans (in India Taviz) form a popular class of magical protection[1]. Most children in Ceylon wear a Pancha Yudha[2]. The claws of a leopard are kept on one's person for safety. The Yantra is a metal case, containing a charmed piece of paper with some figures and designs. Charmed threads are also worn around one's person to guard against diseases associated with the Mata. During the course of some diseases, the Pirit is

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1. de Silva, W.A. J.R.A.S. Vol.XXX. No.79. p.193.
2. Ibid. It is a piece of metal with images of a sword, a couch, a disc, a bow and a trident, worn as a necklace.

chanted (Pirit means the chanting of one or more Pali suttas from the sutta pitaka)[1]. There is also the theory of the evil effect of the evil eye (Nazar); the remedy for this is the Pirit or some amulet[2]. The spirits or gods are sometimes mollified by blood sacrifices[3]. The concept of sacrifice is age-old in Ceylon, and the mahavamsa refers to the sacrifice of the royal daughter of Kelina Tissa in order to appease the enraged ocean[4]. With the advance of society, human sacrifice was replaced in most traditional societies by animal sacrifices. On some occasions cocks and goats are sacrificed. As in India, magic is both white and black - white magic attempts to effect the good of the individual, while black magic works harm[5]. In both countries, demonology and astrology are intimately connected with each other; evil influences are supposed to emanate from particular demons or spirits some of which, in course of time, became planetary deities which are supposed to influence humanity.

White magic implies two specific ceremonies in Ceylon - the Bali and the Tovil[6]. The former is an offering of rice or other foods to spirits or demons in expectation of certain benefits. On these occasions, the priests (Bali-Eduras) recite from memory the relevant verses. Bali books are still preserved in Ceylon and some

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1. The Idea of Sacrifice in Ancient Ceylon, May 1944.
2. J.R.A.S. Vol. XXII. p.519.
3. Ibid. p.520.
4. Ibid. p.521.
5. J.R.A.S. Vol. XXIII. p.610.
6. J.R.A.S. Vol. XXII-XXVIII.

of them can be seen in Colombo Museum even today. The Bali ceremony has come to be associated with the Buddha[1]. One one side in the room the image of Buddha is kept; and on the other a live cock is tied down to a stake. In the midst of chantings the cock is killed, and dancing and drumming continues throughout the ceremony. The Tovil is a more elaborate ceremony; the dance here is more vigorous; there are no clay images and the dancers wear masks and personify the very demons[2]. Black magic inspires great fear among the Sinhalese, and it is probably because of this that an orthodox Sinhalese carefully disposes of a fallen tooth, a hair or a worn out cloth, and isolates the menstruating woman, rejects foods and drinks offered by strangers, and even refuses to be photographed, lest these personal elements should be used by any one to work harm against his person[3].

The priestly order of Ceylon is again organised on roughly the same pattern as in India. There are those who practise demonology (in India Siyanas, or Chattas or Dakots) and they are called in Ceylon Guru Nana. These belong to a lower caste (Nakathi or Oli)[4]. Then there are those who are associated with white magic and other religious ceremonies. In India they are called Purohits and in Ceylon they are called Kapuralam. They belong to a higher caste (the Goyigama). The term for the Jyotishi in

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1. J.R.A.S. Vol. XXIII. p.612.
2. Ibid. p.613.
3. Ibid. p.617.
4. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.75.

Ceylon is Ganithaya or Kendra Balanma. He reads the horoscope[1] and is responsible for conducting the Bali ceremony and other Pujas. The Kapurala also looks after the devale which is a replica of the Hindu temple. The Brahmin may be compared to the Kapurala who is a lay priest. According to Wijesekera, the Kapurala is actually descended from a Brahmin; the succession of title and function is from father to son[2]. All the devales are arranged under one Head who is called the Basnayake Nilame (in India a Mahant)[3].

Just as in India we have the worship of the cow on Gobardhan, the day following Deepawali, in Ceylon also, the peasant worships the guardian deity of the cattle. He is called kuda devyo[4]. Some people also worship regional gods; in addition, there are the sun god, the moon god, and the earth god. The Handa Hami (moon) and the Polova Mahikanta (Earth) are female. In the Ceylonese pantheon, trees and mountains, wind and rain, river and sea - all have a high place[5]. One of the modess of worship is the Parikrama around the shrine[6]. Flowers and leaves, milk and other delicacies, precious metals and clothes form part of the offerings[7]. The procedure in different Pujas reminds a Hindu observer of the Karma Kanda in India. The rituals in Ceylon are strictly observed, for any act

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1. The horoscope is called handahana. See Williams, H: Ceylon. p.300.
2. op. cit. p.117.
3. Ibid. p.161.
4. J.R.A.S. Vol. 28, No.73. p.14.
5. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.194.
6. Also bowing before the images or just lying flat.
7. Williams, H: op. cit. p.208.

of omission or commission may only lead to disastrous results[1]. Every village and family has its ritual specialists (Kula Purohits). Superstition has helped in both countries in the perpetuation of ancient customs. A sneeze at the commencement of any work is considered as bad; spitting out thrice removes the evil effect of the sneeze. Lucky days, when they come, must be seized without delay, and if it so happens that several important rites await a lucky moment, a token start will probably be made with all of them at once. It is sufficient if the beginning is auspicious. If, however, at a particularly lucky moment the villager nishes off to commence a work of cultivation and encounters on the way a strange pariah dog that will not move from his path when he shouts at it, it is clearly an omen that he must go home. And he goes home, no matter how urgent the work in hand. The warning note of a gekko (house lizard), the hoot of an owl and the sight of a black cat will tell him that he must not leave his house that morning at all[2]. A healthy and beautiful child should not be described as such, because of the danger of the evil eye. Wild animals , and specially snakes, should not be referred to by their common name. This reminds one of the way the villagers in India describe a serpent by calling it Davata or Keera. Cooked foods, particularly sweet dishes should not be carried without a piece of charcoal in it. The scratching of the right palm is a sign of coming wealth;

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1. Ibid. p.295.
2. Williams, H. op. cit. p.300.

that of the left is a sign of unforeseen expenditure. The twitching of the right eye for females is bad; for males it is good. Burning of personal clothes is an advance announcement of misfortune. While in India the birth of three sons in succession is considered bad, in Ceylon the number is four. If a pregnant woman eats twin fruits, she will get twins. The crowing of a crow announces the arrival of a guest. The legend associated with a solar or lunar eclipse is associated with Rahu and Ketu respectively and both occasions are considered as portents of misfortunes [1]. During an eclipse the Sinhalese peasants go about with sticks and clubs with the idea of over-powering Rahu and releasing the sun and the moon from being swallowed by him. Thursday is usually considered as lucky for the commencement of an important task [2]. A dead body is an unlucky sight; in India it is considered as a lucky omen. The screaming of a jackal is considered bad. Morning is preferred to the after-noon for the commencement of a journey. The theory of Disha Shool is practised in Ceylon also; on specific days journeys in specific directions should not be undertaken [3].

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THE FOLKLORE AND FORMS OF GREETINGS

As in all peasant societies, most proverbs in Ceylon

1. Ibid. p.300.
2. In India, Saturday is considered as good for the commencement of any task and it should be preferably terminated on Tuesday (Sthapyam Samapyam Shani Bhom Vare).
3. J.R.A.S. Vol.VIII. No. 125.

are related to the agricultural system[1]. Most of the tales and stories are either woven round the peasant and his wife, or ghosts and spirits or animals or gods. The field of demonology has provided in both India and Ceylon the most fertile scope for the creation of legends. There are some tales about some cities or villages whose inhabitants are considered as born fools and all silly actions are credited to them. There are two such villages in Kandy district and one village in Kalutara district where the people are popularly said to be very foolish[2]. Ceylon has its own Shikarpuras, Ambetās, and Bhongaons. The fable is a dedactic tale which attempts to teach a moral by example, the moral being stated at the end of the story. The Jatakas may be included in this class. Very few fables that could be called purely Sinhalese in origin may be found today. Indian influences, with the overwhelming popularity of the Jatakas, have replaced the older indigenous elements even if there were any native tales current at the time of the Indian cultural impact.

The folk poetry of Ceylon also bears the Indian imprint[3]. The love of the mother, filial duty, and devotion to gods - all figure prominently in the Ceylonese folk songs. The names of people in Ceylon are given after the names of gods or holy places, or national heroes as in India. The rivers, mountains, forests, fields and hills derive their names from some special feature of the object

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1. De Zoysa - J.R.A.S. Vol.VII..Pt.I. No.23.
2. Parker,H: Village Folk Tales of Ceylon. Vol.II. Chap.3.
3. J.R.A.S.(C.B.) Silva de,W.A: Dramatic Poetry and Literature of the Sinhalese". XVIII/54, 1903.

itself; certain incidents are associated with places or villages. As animals played the chief role in the Indian fables of which the Jatakas formed a majority, certain animals came to be specially respected and even worshipped in Ceylon[1]. In course of time, a certain sanctity has come to be attached to the life of some animals, and this has survived upto modern times[2]. The entire cultural landscape of Ceylon appears to be a replica of India[3]. This was made possible by continuous cultural contact despite the colonial rule.

Gossiping is almost a universal phenomenon; in India, leisure is often spent in gossiping. It largely centres around sex, local incidents, strange happenings, corruption among Ministers and officers and sometimes just unfounded themes. Every participant contributes his bit of scandalous news. The village well and the common bathing place are the typical venue of gossip among women, both in India as well as in Ceylon[4]. During winter nights, and the rainy season, men, women and children spend long hours near a fire, asking riddles, relating stories, legends and myths. Gambling is quite prevalent in Ceylon; playing-cards and lotteries also find a prominent place. Horse-racing was introduced by the British rulers, and no other event attracts more spectators. In the English schools, modern games like hockey, cricket,

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1. Ibid.
2. Wickremasinghe, Martin: Aspects of Sinhalese Culture. Chapter 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Williams, H. op. cit. p.297.

tennis, soccer, basket ball and volley-ball occupy the main attention[1]. Athletics and swimming have also been introduced. Buffalo fighting is an annual event organised on all national festivals. Elephant contests are no longer in vogue. Cock-fighting was suppressed by law in 1930[2]. Theatrical performances of a crude type are sometimes organised. More important, Indian films have had a very deep impact on the films in Ceylon. Indian tunes dominate the film songs in Ceylon. The setting, the story, the type of dialogues, characterization and the themes of the Indian films find their echo in the Island.

The means of transport that are used in Ceylon again bear the impress of India. It is only in India that the elephant has been tamed and trained since ancient times. Elaphants formed an important limb of ancient and medieval Indian armies. The horse is not indigenous to Ceylon, but was introduced by Indians[3]. The horse-coach was introduced by the Europeans. The cart is an ancient vehicle the origin of which in Ceylon is uncertain; the Rikshaw has found a permanent place because of the availability of cheap human labour. The majority of Rikshaw pullers are South Indian immigrants[4]. The British rulers introduced modern means of transport like the Railway and the Bus.

The forms of greetings and the modes of paying respect prevalent in Ceylon give an unmistakable evidence

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1. Ludovici, Leopold: J.R.A.S. Vol.V. 1870-71, pp.17,33,39.
2. Williams, H. op. cit. p.298.
3. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.281.
4. Economic and Social Survey of Ceylon. 1948. Colombo.p.7.

of the Indian impact[1]. The ancient Indian form of salutation, as one can see in the old wall paintings, was clasping the hands in front of the face[2]. This method with variations in the position of the hands changing from the forehead to the foot, has survived in India and Ceylon. "The Sinhalese adopt this form of salutation at worship, greeting Bhikkus and persons above one's rank. Except in the case of the monk, the superior must return the salute by clasping the hands...The Sinhalese worship prostrate with the forehead, knees and feet touching the ground in front of the image, shrine or person. The parents and Bhikkus are worshipped in this fashion. All strangers are greeted by a clasp of the hands"[3]. The degree of respect in the act of greetings may be judged from the position of the hands and the inclination of the body. The more westernized people greet by shaking hands. Most of the Christians in Ceylon have given up the national form of salutation in favour of the European style. In Sinhalese homes the mother is called Amma or Momma and the father Appa, Tattha or Pappa[4]. In Anglicized homes, the words used are Mummy and Daddy. The parents address the sons as Puta or by name and daughter as Duwa or by name. As in India, while talking to strangers, the mother refers to the father in his absence as the father of the children; the same holds true when the father refers to the mother[5].

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1. De Alvis, James: J.R.A.S. Vol.III. No.10.
2. Ibid. p.74.
3. Ibid. p.76.
4. Ibid. p.79.
5. Williams, H: op. cit. p.290.

The Bhikkus address the laymen in polite and respectful terms - men as Upasaka and women as Upasika. The laymen address the Bhikku as Swaminvahanse. If women accompany the men, light loads and babies are entrusted to them. The heavier loads are taken by the men. The women, however, keep to the rear of the party. One authority has thus described the hospitality of an average Sinhalese peasant:

> " What charming hospitable people the Sinhalese are", falls from the lips of almost every visitor to Ceylon. It may be a more polite expression, but it contains the literal truth. The Sinhalese peasant imbued with Indian culture still practises the ancient custom even in a changing world. Such a generous disposition has become second nature to him. He will offer help, food, drink and shelter to even the complete stranger. At great personal inconveniences, suffering and hardship the peasant ministers to the needs of the guest. The differences of colour, race or religion matter not in the least; the visitor or guest must be satisfied lest great shame may befall the village in particular and the Sinhalese in general. Any casual visitor, traveller or officer of the Public Services who happened to have visited the remote parts of the Island cannot fail to bear testimony to this sterling quality. According to the ancient order of things provision had been made for the stranger visitor or traveller by erecting resorts, (1) where they could shelter and live. These were the State Rest Houses (Ambalam). Today, these buildings accommodate beggars and the destitutes. The resthouse alone remains as a part of the Government organisation. Invited guests are received with great pomp and ceremony and greeted with all honour and respect. The roads and pathways are decorated. Sand is strewn on the ground. Flags are hoisted. Archways are erected. One large structure called a Gedi-ge, hung with coconuts, leaves and paintings is put up whereon the words "Welcome to so and so" are inscribed. The whole village flock to honour a special person and the occasion not

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1. An ambalam, madama or tanayama is such an institution where the people could take food, cook their meals and pass a few days.

> only satisfies the vanity of all those concerned but also gratifies the village. Further, the village pride is enhanced and the mind of the villager finds much matter for contemplation. The impression lasts until another occasion supersedes the event"(1).

§ 9

RELIGIOUS LIFE

So far as the religious life of Ceylon is concerned, it bears the deepest impact of the mainland. We have already referred to the circumstances in which Buddhism came to be introduced in the Island. Of the two types of Buddhism, the Hėnayana and Mahayana, Ceylon follows the doctrine of the Hinayana. Mr. Vincent Smith has thus brought out the difference between the two sects :

> " The person of Buddha inspired in his disciples such ardent affection and devotion that very soon after his death he was regarded as being something more than a man. By the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier, he had become a god to whom prayer might be offered. The primitive Buddhism which ignored the Divine was known in later times as the Hinayana, or Lesser Vehicle of salvation, while the modified religion, which recognized the value of prayer and acknowledged Buddha as the Saviour of mankind was called the Mahayana or the Greater Vehicle. While the original official Buddhism was a dry, highly moralized philosophy much resembling in its practical operation the Stoic schools of Greece and Rome, the later emotional Buddhism approached closely to Christian doctrines in substance, although not in name. In another direction it became almost indistinguishable from Hinduism"(2).

During the reign of King Kanishka, a Council of theologians was convened to settle disputed questions of Buddhist faith and practice. The decrees of the Council

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1. Wijesekera. op. cit. pp.175-176.
2. Oxford History of India: p.55.

took the form of authorised commentaries on the canons, which were engraved on sheets of paper and placed for safety in a stupa. It was here that the Buddhist sect which alone sent delegates to this Council, was formally classed as belonging to the Hinayana, the more primitive form of Buddhism[1]. But the cult actually practised more extensively at this time, was that usually associated with the Mahayana as is clearly proved by the numerous sculptures of the age[2]. In Ceylon, today, 9[illegible] per cent of the Sinhalese are Hinayana Buddhists, and Hinayana Buddhism is a powerful social force in the Island[3]. This was undoubtedly due to the revival of Buddhism during the 19th century. When faced with the strong counter-attraction of an enthusiastic Christian Mission, the Buddhist leaders adopted many Christian practices, including the communal singing of hymns and the establishment of Young Mens' Buddhist Associations.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is not necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of the theological aspects of Hinayana Buddhism. What is important from our point of view is to have a clear idea of the social and economic implications of the religious practices in Ceylon, and to correlate them with the question of Indo-Ceylon relations. The average Sinhalese is not very much interested in the philosophical aspects and esoteric

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1. Wickremasinghe, M. op. cit. Chapter 6.
2. Ibid. p.132.
3. Petterson, A.B.C: The Far East. A Social Geography. p.170.

doctrines of Buddhism; even its ethical and moral disciplines are seldom observed. This may be due to their easy-going way of life or to the abstruse nature of the Buddhist doctrines. The result has been that a large mass of external trappings and beliefs in the form of magic, ceremonial show and gaiety have been taken for the real doctrine itself. The Buddhist imagination has been attracted by the more popular primitive ideas of "bali", "tovil" and other forms of magic, because in these, the people feel an immediate material benefit in this very existence rather than in a future state of being. As Mr. Williams writes:

> " Although Buddhists, the villagers are profoundly ignorant of the real tenets of the faith, now so hopelessly corrupted by Hindu idolatory. They live in a perpetual nightmare of good and bad omens of evil spirits and demons, the beliefs of their yakkho forebears. They are, in fact, devil worshippers, still, and even in their worship of Buddha they do not disguise their devil worshipping proclivities. Cruelty and death, sickness and pain all these are in the hands of legions of devils and spirits with which the unseen world teems. Many Bhikkus share those beliefs. One must remember, however, that the Christian creed talks of descending into Hell, and the intelligent Buddhist priest will ask what difference there is between the spirits and devils in which he believes and Satan and his angels. Yet, in the concrete and actual form in which one meets the spirits of the Sinhalese beliefs, the mind is sickened and appalled by the black depths of superstition revealed"(1).

The Sangha with its rigid course of Bhikkus was at one time a strong organisation;before independence, the laymen had

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1. Ceylon. p. 301.

lost their customary veneration for the monks. It is only after 1956 that the Buddhist revival has been introducing a change with regard to the respect for the Sangha. During the British period, the temples in Ceylon as in India became family concerns and discipline became extremely loose[1]. The Sangha came to be divided into a number of sects, the prominent among which were the Siamese, the Amarapura and the Ramanna. Bitter rivalry developed among these sects and considerations of birth and distinctions of caste prevailed in each, leading to differences in procedure, admission, ordination and rituals. Inspite of this degeneration, the Sangha, on the whole, survived, and the yellow robe was looked upon with respect as the symbol of the Buddha. From birth to death, the Bhikku maintained a bond of association as family friend, adviser and religious guide[2]. The young Bhikku was taught Sinhalese, Pali and Sanskrit. A Buddhist temple or Pansala consisted of a dagoba (relic chamber), Vihara (image house) Bo-tree, a preaching Hall (Bana Maduwa) and other living apartments. The Bhikku had to be educated at the Vidyodaya Pirivena in Colombo, or at Vidyalankara in Kandy[3].

The Vidyalankara Pirivena now has been in existence for about one hundred years. It runs a Gurukula Vidyalaya, a free Night School, and a Dharma Vidyalaya. In 1946, four hundred students, some of them from China, Burma,

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1. Pakeman: Ceylon. p.69.
2. Enriques: Ceylon Past and Present. Chap. I.
3. Ibid. Chap.III.

Siam and India, attended its classes in Buddhist teachings and other Oriental subjects[1]. There was a whole room filled with volumes of the Tri-Pitaka printed in Chinese scholar in charge of this library. Scholars from Holland, England, America, Switzerland, besides many from Asian countries, lived and studied here. Okamoto of Japan, Rahula Sanskrityayana, Ananda Kouselyayana and Jagadish Kasyapa from India, Arya Asanga from Holland, Upatissa from Siam, Fa-Fen from China were some of the distinguished names on the rolls of the Pirivena. The Pirivena was started as a challenge to the condition of the 'New Ceylon' of 1875 when Buddhists hung their heads in shame and were afraid to admit that they were Buddhists[2].

It is important to realise that although the Buddhist doctrine differs in some important aspects from the basic tenets of Hinduism, in essence they represent the same spirit[3]. It is a wrong impression that Buddha gave a teaching which was in opposition to the Vedic tradition. His opposition to the prevalent Hindu religion was confined to a few important issues. He did not recognise the divinity of the Vedas. He did not concede the Brahmanical claim of superiority by birth. He did not believe in an unchangeable and immutable Atta or Atma and he thought that its growth and transformation have to be willed. He did believe in the gods in heaven but he did

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1. Vijayatunga: The Isle of Lanka. p.236.
2. Ibid. p.236.
3. For differences between Buddhism and Hinduism see G.C. Pandey: Studies in the Origins of Buddhism.

not assign them any place of importance in human destiny, for according to him this destiny has to be worked out by each individual partly for himself and partly jointly with others. These were the main planks of his opposition to the Aryan school of thought, and he did refer the contemporary priests to the period when the aberrations of belief and the heresies which he criticised had not crept into their creed. His main opposition was against the heretical school itself and he laid much store by the ascetic way of life[1].

But, then, it must be remembered that while Buddhism and Jainism, as forms of revolt against the Sacerdotalism and mysticism of the Vedic tradition, had had occasion to reject the authority of the Vedas and the Brahmanical ritualism, both these creeds unreservedly accepted the law of Karma. As one authority has put it : "It is karma that gives a certain unity of thought to the three creeds of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism and makes of them a characteristic expression of the Indic temper"[2]. Through the ages karma has held its ground and has influenced countless generations in thought and deed. If, at its lowest level of comprehension, it has resulted in fatalism, at its highest karma is a striking attempt at making order out of the diverse and confusing manifestations of the world[3]. It is, of course, true that the Buddhist concept of karma is somewhat different from the traditional

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1. Davids, Rhys: Buddhist India. Chap.XIII.
2. Gokhale, B.G: Indian Thought Through the Ages. p.93.
3. Lall, G.C: Buddha Dhamma. p.234.

Hindu concept [1]. In one of his discourses the Buddha stated:

> " O priests, if any one were to say that a man must reap according to his deeds, in that case O priests there is no religious life, nor is any opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of misery. But if any one says, O priests, that the reward a man reaps accords with his deeds in that case, O priests, there is a religious life and opportunity is afforded for the entire extinction of misery"(2).

According to this sermon, the law of karma is the law of redemption. It is the law which uplifts and turns upwards to freedom, bliss and happiness, and turns the flow of the blind and unconscious potentiality towards Dharmakaya. The karmik force that is applied to each case is exactly in the measure that is necessary to redeem the man. It is a concept different from the law of karma, suggesting a punitive law or the law of retribution [3]. This latter interpretation makes the concept of karma a brutalizing one [4]. According to Buddhism, once a man grows conscious of his divine self, the Budhichita in him gets awakened and he feels sincerely sorry for whatever wrong he may have committed, he begins to live a life of high and noble endeavour in perfecting himself into righteousness and wisdom [5]. He becomes selfless, lives more for the benefit of others than his own and he becomes like a quiet and limpid stream whose waters are cool and free from all impurities [6]. If the redemptive character of the karmic law

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1. Gokhale: op. cit. p.94.
2. Lall, G.C. op. cit. pp.233-34.
3. Ibid. p.236.
4. Ibid. p.237.
5. David's, Rhys: op. cit.Chap. XII.
6. Ibid.

is fully grasped there would be little difficulty in understanding the doctrine of the "divine grace". Dharamkaya is always working for good, and wherever it can, it uplifts, it beautifies, it inspires and it elevates. No opportunity is lost, no chance is ever missed. The Grace of Dharamkaya is a more powerful redemptive force than the karmic law [1]. The transformation that takes place through the Grace of Dharamkaya is often gradual but sometimes it is also sudden. The grace manifests itself only when through some silent wish, prayer, penitence or action man turns away from the path of evil and becomes suddenly responsible for doing some good, which may not appear to be an outstanding act, but deeply stirs the man in his innermost core and transforms him. Many examples of this sudden transformation and getting fully established in truth are recorded in Buddhist religious literature [2]. Well-known amongst them are Angulimala the bandit; Patachara, the girl who had eloped with a servant; Ambapali, the courtesan of Vaisali; and Vimala, the dancer of Ujjaini [3].

From the point of view of doctrine, therefore, there does not appear to be any considerable difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. The concepts of artha, renunciation, non-violence and transmigration unite the two systems and establish points of contact at various levels. Buddha's 8 precepts represent the ordinary Hindu

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1. Lall,G.C: op. cit. Chapter XX.
2. Ibid. p.237.
3. Ibid. pp. 237-238.

ethics. It is also necessary to remember that in Ceylon Buddhism was constantly under the impact of Hinduism. While in India it came to be completely submerged by the Hindu stream of thought, in Ceylon it persisted in retaining its identity. Even in India, the Buddhist Sangha might have met with tremendous success, if its members had concerned themselves only with the pith of the Buddhist teachings, and had continued to evince the same solicitude for promoting human welfare and happiness as had characterized the Buddha. Instead, philosophy, ritualism, tantra, formalism and minor rules of discipline became its main concern and preoccupation. The result was the eclipse of Buddhism in India. In the case of Ceylon, the sheer necessity of preserving the separate entity and distinctness of their country from the mainland obliged the Sinhalese to retain their Buddhist moorings. But in practice, they could not escape the Hindu impact. As we stated earlier, they believed in different gods and goddesses. Full moon day is considered as a day of special merit; the family priests play an important part on all important occasions of life - marriage, birth, building a new house, sickness and death. Even trees and animals have come to be worshipped in a manner which reminds one of the degenerate form of Hinduism. The Buddhists in Ceylon pay homage to the Bo-tree, images of the Buddha and other deities. While the people believe in one Supreme Godhead they also worship other lesser deities of varying rank. An interesting class is the Bandara group of gods specially

popular among the up-country people[1]. Above this group ranks another group of 5 deities whose influence is spread throughout the Island. There are Kataragama, Saman, Vishnu, Natha and Pattini. Vishnu, in fact, is Ramachandra; Kataragama is Kartikeya, the Hindu God of War; Saman is Lakshman, Rama's brother; Natha is Padmapani or Siva, the future Buddha; Pattini (Goddess of Chastity) is the chaste wife of Vishnu mentioned in Tamil literature[2]. King Gajabahu is supposed to have introduced her worship in Ceylon on his return from South India. So popular are these gods or demigods that their worship has entered into popular Buddhist belief to such a degree as to make their worship seem an essential part of Buddhist worship. The inherent beliefs of the people in a variety of deities are so strong as to delude the superficial observer into accepting them as part of Buddhism. In so far as the whole of life is coloured by the worship and devotion of these they enter into the living religion of the masses[3]. Most of the superstitions associated with Hinduism are widely prevalent in Ceylon. The festivals and fairs are largely associated with religion. In pomp and ceremonial, no annual socio-religious event can rival the Kandy perahera which lasts for three weeks. The Dondra fair and the Vel festival bring the Buddhists and the Hindus close together. The latter festival is conducted by the Hindus to commemorate

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1. There are national heroes who have just been deified.
2. J.R.A.S. Vol. XXXI.
3. Williams, H. op. cit. p.302.

the myth of the god Subramaniam. Sripeda remains the common religious meeting place of Buddhists and the Hindus[1].

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THE CATHOLIC ACTION

In the light of all this, one would be driven to the conclusion that the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Hindu Tamils should be able to live peacefully without any acrimony or bitterness, and that religion in Ceylon should not be a dividing force at all. This, indeed, is the story from the earliest times down to the days of the British rule. As the Memorandum on the Indo-Ceylon problem put it: "All the communities in Ceylon lived in perfect harmony and friendliness in the centuries upto the 20th without having any quarrel whatsoever on the question of religion or language, and they were consciousness of their mother-land, India"[2]. Sharp differences between the Buddhists and the Tamils grew up under the impact of the colonial rule. The reasons partly have been economic and partly political. The introduction of Indian labour in Ceylon in the 19th century created a situation in which the relations between the two communities were put to a severe strain. This question we examine in detail in the last chapter. Equally important have been the activities

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1. For an account of these fairs refer to Williams. op. cit. pp.303-5.
2. Mss. The National Archives of Ceylon. Nuwara Eliya.

of the Catholic Action in Ceylon. This movement became active in the Island from the time it was realised that Ceylon would become politically independent, and that as a result there might be a revival of Buddhism and Hinduism, the two indigenous religions. Under British rule, every Christian Church had been incorporated by law and this legal act had given them very wide powers. The Roman Catholic Church had been incorporated under the Roman Catholic Archbishop Ordinance No.19 of 1906 and under this enactment, the Archibishop had become a corporation sole, having perpetual succession and vested with full powers to acquire, purchase, take, hold and enjoy movable and immovable property of every description, and to sell or otherwise dispose of the same[1]. In terms of this Ordinance, the Roman Catholic Archbishop also had the right to invest money in business or industrial undertakings and, in fact, he possessed every power the law was capable of granting[2]. On the other hand, as a corporation sole with perpetual succession he was not liable to death duty. He was not obliged to render accounts either to the members of the Church or to the Government. In addition, he was also exempted from all taxes including Income Tax. The net result of all this was that when Ceylon got independence, the Roman Catholic Church was the wealthiest and the most powerful organization outside the Government[3].

Thus, when the Roman Catholic Church realised

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. p.21.
2. Ibid. p.22.
3. C tholic Action. Colombo. p.122.

that political independence was soon becoming a reality, it sought to perpetuate its power under the changed conditions by having itself safeguarded by the new Constitution which granted independence to the country. Sir Ivor Jennings who drafted the Order-in-Council (Independence of Ceylon) has revealed that the proviso to Section 29(2)(d) "was slightly amended in final drafting to meet the views of the Roman Catholics"[1]. The amendment is as follows : "Provided that in any case where a religious body is incorporated by law, no such alteration shall be made except at the request of the governing authority of that body"[2]. Discussing the effect of this proviso, the Buddhist Commission Report says: "Parliament, in Ceylon, may reduce the powers of the Queen, but it cannot reduce the powers of the Christian religious bodies. Over Ceylon, Christianity sits enthroned, and Ceylon bound hand and foot has been delivered at the foot of the Cross"[3].

There is evidence to suggest that there was a Kitchen Cabinet to advise the first Prime Minister of Independent Ceylon, Mr. D.S.Senanayake, on State policy as well as on the day-to-day administration, and that this Cabinet was comprised entirely of Catholics[4]. Three Catholic Knights and a Catholic historian used to meet Mr. D.S.Senanayake at lunch once a week at the Senate Building,

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1. The Commonwealth of Asia. Chap. VI.
2. Sessional Paper III - 1948 - Colombo. p.22.
3. Betrayal of Buddhism. p.31.
4. Catholic Action. p.123.

and state affairs were discussed at this meeting[1]. We are sure that Mr. Senanayake did not for a moment suspect that these gentlemen were Catholic Actionists who were acting under the direction of the Catholic hierarchy and were seeking to influence his policies so as to make them favourable to the Church. But in restrospect we can see how all his actions were influenced by the advice tendered by this Catholic clique. This group saw to it that the newly formed armed forces (the Army, the Navy and the Air Force) were subjected to "Christian penetration"[2]. More than 75 per cent of the staff posts in the Army, 95 per cent in the Navy and more than 60 per cent in the Air Force were manned by Roman Catholics, and practically every key post was filled by one of them[3]. Care was taken to see that even the post of the Civilian Administrator, a post filled by an officer belonging to the Accountants' Service, was always held by a Catholic or a Christian in each of the armed forces. Once the key positions were captured by Catholics they saw to it that the Catholic power within the armed forces was maintained unimpaired. They did this by discriminating against Buddhists and other non-Catholics in the matter of recruitment, training and promotion[4]. Mr. Senanayake had a genuine fear of Communism and the Catholics in the United National Party and especially the members of the Kitchen cabinet who were in close

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1. Ibid. p.124.
2. History Today. May 1958. p.348.
3. Catholic Action. p.123.
4. Ibid. p.124.

contact with the Roman Catholic hierarchy worked on that fear, and led Mr. Senanayake into the belief that while a Buddhist or a Hindu may be a Communist in secret, a Roman Catholic will always be anti-Communist. It was thus that the armed forces of a country with a 75 per cent Buddhist population came to be dominated by Roman Catholics who comprise only 7 per cent of the total population[1].

Another act of Mr. D.S.Senanayake which worked against the interest of the Buddhists was the manning of the Public Service Commission entirely by non-Buddhists[2]. The Soulbury Commission intended the Public Service Commission to be an independent body immune from external pressures political or otherwise[3]. The Public Service Commission, however, soon became the champion of minority religious and racial groups and sought to maintain the colonial structure of the Public Service which favoured the Christians and the Tamils[4]. Catholic Action naturally lost no opportunity in making full use of this attitude of the P.S.C. and to grab as many posts as possible for

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1. It may also be stated that this all-Catholic clique was in no small measure responsible for the rift between Mr. D.S.Senanayake and Mr. S.W.R.D.Bandaranaike, which ultimately led to the latter's resignation from the post of Minister of Local Administration and his break away from the United National Party. Mr. Bandaranaike as the Leader of the House and the most senior member of the Cabinet was successor presumptive to Mr. D.S.Senanayake as the Prime Minister. But his politics were far too socialist and nationalist for the liking of the Catholic Church. Worst of all, Mr. Bandaranaike was insisting that due place must be accorded to the Buddhist religion and the Sinhala language.
2. Catholic Action. p.125.
3. Soulbury Commission Report. 1945. Chap.XVIII.
4. Catholic Action. p.126.

Catholics in the Public Service[1].

It is not difficult to see the various ways in which the Catholic action in Ceylon has been responsible for be-devilling the relations between the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamil Hindus. In the eye of the Sinhalese politicians the Catholic Church has wielded great influence over Tamil leaders; they have firmly been of the opinion that it is under the influence of the Catholic Church that the Tamil politicians adopted an anti-Sinhala policy and worked under separatist tendencies. The policy of the Roman Catholic Church since its inception has been to exploit the political and linguistic differences between the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamil Hindus, and thus prevent these two communities from being united. A Hindu-Buddhist unity would naturally militate against the expansionist activities of the Catholic Church both in the North and in the South, and the Church appears to have been determined to prevent this[2]. This they did by infiltrating

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1. As a matter of fact, within six years, i.e. from 1948 to 1954, the Apostolate of Public Institutions of the Catholic Action Movement was able to infiltrate into the Treasury, the Customs, the Education Department, theGovernment Stores, the Department of Social Services, the Department of National Housing, the Income Tax Department, the Fisheries Department, the State Mortgage Bank, and various other Government Departments and to 'Christianize' them systematically.
2. In a pamphlet written by Rev. Chas. Wickramanayake and circulated among the members of the Diocesan Council of the Church of Ceylon in October 1958, he says: "Long before the politicians raised the cry, a Bishop of God in Jaffna is said to have raised the cry 'Tamil is in peril' and the Christian Church of God in Jaffna is accused of having persisted in this policy, even though a Mrs. Menon from India said that this cry was absurd". Reference here is to Mrs. Laxmi Menon, Deputy Minister for External Affairs in India.

into the ranks of political parties in Ceylon. The Federal party, particularly, came in for the serious attention of the Catholic Action. It is predominently a Tamil party with only a handful of Muslims. While only about 9 per cent of the Sinhalese population is Catholic by religion, the percentage of Catholics among the Ceylon Tamils is about twenty five. The pressure of the 'Pope's block votes' must, therefore, naturally be greater on the Tamil politicians than on the Sinhalese leaders. The Buddhists have proved to be much less amenable to the Christian influence than the Tamils. This explains why the members of Parliament belonging to the Federal Party became champions of the Catholic Church and of the Catholic Action Movement inside and outside the Parliament. The Federal Party has also toed theCatholic Church's line on all important issues that came up before Parliament, although their stand has been against the interest of the greater majority of the Tamil Hindus. Some such issues were the Paddy Lands Bill, the Taxation of Religious Bodies Bill, and the Schools Take-over Bill. The Federal Party is also for the continuance of the Catholic domination in the armed forces although the Tamil Hindus, just as much as the Sinhalese Buddhists, have been discriminated against by the Catholic High Command in these forces.

The Catholic Action spoiled the relations between the Sinhalese and the Tamils not only by infiltrating into the ranks of the Federal Party and the United National Party. but also by capturing some of the organs of public

opinion, which it used for spreading poisonous propaganda. In many countries the Press has been paid special attention by the Church[1]. The case of the United States may be kept in mind. The daily Press in Ceylon has been no less subservient to the Catholic Church. Catholic Action has been very successful in infiltrating into both the important newspaper groups in Ceylon. The Times Group of newspapers came, in fact, to be managed and edited by militant Catholic Actionists, although some of the important shareholders of theGroup are prominent Buddhists like Messrs. Henry Amarasuriya and Donald Ranaweera. This group of papers is well and truly run as a propaganda machine of the Catholic Church, supporting what the Church supports and opposing what the Church opposes. The policy of the Times Group of papers is said to be formulated by no less a person than the Archbishop of Colombo himself[2]. As with the Press,

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1. Speaking of the influence of Catholic Action on the American Press, Emmet Mc Loughllin says in his book- American Culture and Catholic Schools: "The most important channel for Catholic Censorship and propaganda is still the Press. The Hierarchy does its best to keep unfavourable news out of the daily papers and our national magazines. This would include un-American activities of the clergy in other parts of the world, negotiations of the Vatican with Totalitarian powers, questionable actions of the American clergy such as the arrest of a priest for drunk and reckless driving (especially with a parishioner's wife in the same car). This censorship is usually achieved through Catholic members of the newspapers' local staff and the ever present Democles' sword of the threat of a subscription boycott of the large Catholic public or on advertising boycott of the Catholic merchants"(Page 140).
2. In the course of an address delivered at the presentation of the Buddhist Commission Report to the Maha Sangha and the Buddhist public at Ananda College on the 4th February 1956, Mr. L.H.Mettananda referred to the Lake House Newspapers and said: "The Roman Catholic Church with its vast resources is openly and blantantly

so with the Radio. Until 1948, the Programmes Organiser in charge of the English Buddhist Programmes was a Roman Catholic Lady. The Catholic Action Group in Radio Ceylon made every possible effort to drive a wedge between the Sinhalese and the Tamils and to exploit their differences (in fomenting which they played a leading part) for the purpose of propagating the Roman Catholic faith. For about 15 years before independence, more radio time was given to Christian denominations for their religious broadcast than to the Buddhists or Hindus[1]. Educational institutions also were not neglected. Following the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI, the Catholic Church in Ceylon made every possible effort to capture the educational institutions of the Island[2]. During the last lap of the British rule (1946-47),

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exploiting the poverty, the ignorance and the helplessness of the Buddhist masses. The Buddhists have no way of ventilating their grievances and getting them redressed in this democratic land of ours. The Lake House Newspapers which support the Government and the Roman Catholic Church pay no heed to the grievances of the Buddhists. On the other hand, these papers publish glowing tributes to the Catholic Clergy and Nuns and give prominence to Roman Catholic parades and processions. They also suppress any form of local news critical of, or detrimental to, the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time they advise the Buddhists to be tolerant. The Dinamina, the Silumina and the Janata fool the Bhikkus and the Sinhalese reading public, while the Daily News and the Observer ridicule the Bhikkus, the Sinhalese teachers and the Ayurvedic physicians and the Sinhalese reading public in general. Government rejoices at all these; so does the Roman Catholic Church".

1. Catholic Action. op. cit. Chapter 10.
2. Pope Pius XI says in his Encyclical Divini Illius Magistri (1929) which is known as the Bible of Catholic Education: "Education is first and super-eminently the function of the Church, and this by a two-fold supernatural title which God has conferred upon her alone and which, therefore, transcends in authority and validity any title of the natural order...The Church's mission in the sphere of education extends to all peoples, to all places, and to all times, according to the command of Christ: "Teach ye all nations" and there is no power on earth that can legitimately oppose or

a Bill designed to provide for free education from the Kindergarden to the University was passed and it became law after assent by the Secretary for Colonies in the British Government. The Bill was framed in accordance with the recommendations of the Special Committee on Education set up by the Government in 1941. The Bill was opposed bitterly by the Roman Catholic Church and the ruling Party which (fearing the Catholic block vote) was not very enthusiastic about its passage into law. However, owing to the massive support given to the Bill by the Buddhists and to the untiring efforts of Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara, the then Minister of Education, it ultimately became the law of the land. In 1947, General Elections were held and Dr. C.W.W. Kannangara who was hailed as the Father of Free Education was defeated at the polls, mainly owing to the half-hearted support given by his Party leaders. The campaign of vilification and character-assassination carried on by Catholic Action against Dr. Kannangara was, in no small measure, responsible for his defeat[1].

Finally it may be stated that under the influence of the Catholic Church, some of the Tamil leaders, in the considered judgment of the Sinhalese, began to function almost like traitors[2]. Most of the literature issued by

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1. Catholic Action, pp.145-46.
2. This was stated to me by most of the Sinhalese intellectuals and political leaders, whom I interviewed in the Island.

the Catholic Action in Ceylon and outside seems to support the charges of treason against the Catholic Action. Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical Divini Redemptoris (March 1937) outlined the ultimate aim of Catholic Action: "The ultimate aim of Catholic Action being to bring about the effective reign of Jesus Christ in family and civil society as well as in individuals, its work may be described truly as a social apostolate. Its chief and constant task must, therefore, be that of carefully conducted training, and preparing its members to fight God's battles"[1]. Similarly in 1939, Pope Pius XII in his Encyclical Letter on the "Mystical Body of Christ" made it an obligation for all Catholic laymen to extend the membership and power of the Church[2]. The call of the Church implied that even those Catholics who were in the Legislature, or in the Government, should use their offices for the propagation of the faith. In 1940 Pope Pius XII declared: "The Hierarchy has the right to command and issue instructions and directions, and Catholic Action must place all its energy at the disposal of the Hierarchy"[3]. It is, therefore, quite obvious that

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1. Quoted in Nathaniel Micklem: Papalism and Politics.pp.25-2
2. Ibid. p.37.
3. Archbishop Carboni, the Apostolic delegate to Australia said in the course of an address to members of the Institute of Social Order: " I refer to those who, in the designs of Providence, have been called upon to bear the burdens of office either in the industrial organizations or in the realm of government itself. In a democratic society, you are the repositories of influence and power. It is a great but onerous possession. You can do great good. You can, by apathy, negligence or positive wrong doing, accomplish evil. This much, however, is certain. You may have been elected by the people. But your authority comes from

Catholics cannot be regarded as ordinary loyal citizens. According to one authority: "They are a potential Fifth column, potential traitors to the state of which they are citizens, potential rebels against the society of which they are members. This in virtue of the essence of their religious tenets and of the binding allegiance they owe to their religious leader"[1]. It is in this light that we can appreciate the seeds of conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils from the point of view of inter-mixture of cultures. The feeling among the Sinhalese is that the Tamils, by joining Catholic Action, are guilty of anti-national activities[2]. In fact they are not so much against the Tamils, at least from the limited point of view of what is commonly termed as cultural aggressiveness, as they are against the combined invasion of the Tamils and the Christians[3]. On this showing, it is wrong to imagine that the struggle between the Tamils and the Buddhists in the Island is a struggle between Hinduism and Buddhism. As stated earlier, these two religions are not mutually

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God Himself. He will demand a heavy reckoning. Whatever authority, whatever power is reposed in you, is given to you in trust; to use it not for yourself, for your own aggrandisement, but for your neighbour, for your country, for God and for the Church. When you examine your conscience, search well to ensure thatyou are faithful to the great responsibilities of public office which God has entrusted to you...If then, you are called to serve God not simply as an ordinary soldier of the line, but as one in whom authority is reposed, remember always that your work is not merely a job. It is a vocation". (Social Survey. Oct.1954.p.9).

1. Manhatton, Ayro: "Catholic Imperialism and World Freedom". p.128.
2. Catholic Action. p.5.
3. Mettananda: Indian Problem In Ceylon. Colombo. Chap.3.

exclusive either in terms of Doctrine or Practice. The post-independence movement (in Ceylon) for the revival of Buddhism and the Sinhala language can be evaluated properly only if we do not lose sight of the big stick, and the not too clandestine stick, which Catholic Action wields over the Tamils. The Sinhalese leaders feel that the Indian Tamils in Ceylon are the allies of the Catholic Church, anti-national, the spokesmen of vested interests, the advocates of an alliance with the West, and the enemies of non-alignment[1]. It is only in this context that we can have an understanding of the changed foreign policy of Ceylon after 1956, when Mr. Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister. On the one hand the Ceylon Government was determined to make Sinhala the state language and Buddhism the State religion, thereby aggravating the Indo-Ceylon problem; on the other, it was determined to follow the foreign policy of non-alignment, thereby coming closer to India. The steps taken by Colombo on the allied questions of language and religion were motivated by nationalism; the policy of non-alignment which it followed after 1956 was also motivated by the same force. The former tended to push India away from Ceylon; the latter tended to pull them closer. Our failure to understand the Ceylonese policies on language and religion lies in our ignorance of the role of the Catholic Action in the Island and of its influence on the Tamil leaders. If only these leaders keep themselves aloof from Catholic Action,

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1. Ibid, Chap. 5.

there will not be any insurmountable difficulty in their cultural assimilation with the Sinhala-Tamil plural society of Ceylon. It is here that one of the clues to the present Indo-Ceylon problem can be found[1].

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EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

In short, the divisions in the Ceylonese society and the existing sharp differences between the Tamils and the Sinhalese were, to a large extent, fomented during the

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1. In the course of my visit to the Ceylon University, I met some Professors and Heads of Departments. An interesting document was given to me by them. It is a circular issued by the Vice Chancellor to members of the staff. This is dated March 9, 1961. It says: "The Council on the recommendation of the Senate decided at its meeting held on 10th February, 1961 that:- '(a) all University Teachers except those who are 50 years or more should equip themselves to teach in Swabasha within the next five years; and (b) teachers will have to get proficient in Swabasha as a necessary condition for obtaining probationary study leave'. All University Teachers are kindly requested to note these decisions".
   I also learnt about an allegation made against a Professor (a Tamil) that in making Examination scripts, he favoured those candidates who used the Tamil medium. Since it is a secret document, I am under an obligation not to reproduce or quote from it. After hearing this Professor I interviewed a prominent member of the Committee for Investigation in the allegations against the former. He told me that the policy of the Government and of the University was not to discriminate against the Tamils, but to prevent the Christian infiltration, and to ensure justice for the Sinhalese students. He obviously thought that the Christians were using the Tamil language in order to gain the favour of the Tamil Professors in the examination. When I met the Minister of Education, Mr. Badi Uddin Mohd. for a detailed discussion of the problems of education, he agreed with the suggestion of the member of the investigation committee. The policy of Swabasha and Buddhism as the State Religion thus seems to be directed against Catholic Action.

colonial rule, partly by deliberate colonial policy, and partly by the Catholic Action which flourished under the benign care of the foreign rulers. This is illustrated best by the educational system given to the Island by the British. Under the Dutch and in early British times, some attempt had been made to provide education through the media of the Sinhala and the Tamil. But, during the British period, these languages were negledted - in fact education itself was not very much encouraged in the beginning. Governor Brownrigg opened a number of Missionary Schools and upto 1832, their number was 235 with about 10,000 students on the rolls[1]. In 1816, the American Congregationalist Mission established a few schools in Jaffna[2]. The Anglican Church Missionary Society opened a school in Kotte about the same time. In 1833-34, the Macauley Minutes had laid down that education in India should be imparted through the English language; these were accepted as the future policy of the British Government in India in 1835, The echo of this policy was heard in Ceylon also[3]. The Colebrooke Report had strongly recommended education with English as the medium of instruction, and the setting up of a Schools' Commission. The Commission was mainly under the control of the Anglican Clergy[4]. Haltingly the Government realised that it had a duty to see that the people of the Island must be given

1. Sessional Paper. XVII. Colombo. 1962. p.20.
2. Ibid. p.31.
3. Ibid. p.133.
4. Ibid. p.129.

some education. But, by and large, it was content to leave much of education to the Christian Missions, to whom grants-in-aid were made for the support of their schools. The primary purpose of the Mission Schools, as Mr. Pakeman writes, was to convert children to Christianity[1]. Later the Government made it a condition of a grant-in-aid that non-Christian children should not have to attend classes in religious instructions. But this provision remained on paper and most children were given instructions in Christianity. The parents had almost a compulsion to send their sons to the Mission Schools which gave them certificates which were in the nature of pass-ports to government service. In 1881, the Senior Cambridge Examination began to be held in Ceylon, and the next year the London Matriculation. In 1886, the Intermediate Arts Examination of London University could be taken in certain subjects. A year earlier, the Central School Commission was replaced by the Department of Public Instructions, which, after 1910 became the Education Department.

The important features of the history of education in Ceylon must be noted, for they have a bearing on the problem of Indo-Ceylon relations. In the first place, the entire educational system had been dominated by the Christian Missions[2]. The results of this domination were utter negligence of the Sinhala language and Buddhism[3]. In

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1. Ceylon. p.100.
2. Sessional Paper I. Interim Report of the National Education Commission, 1961. Colombo. paras 46-47.
3. Ibid. paras 96-97.

Jaffna, most Tamils had good opportunity for education. Just as the Muslims in India, for quite some time, neglected English education, and for that reason, lagged far behind the Hindus, in Ceylon, the Sinhalese neglected English education and the Tamils easily got the better of them. In course of time, this had sharp reaction on the movement for the revival of Sinhala language[1]. Secondly, during the British period, although Estate Schools had been established, their state of affairs was not satisfactory[2]. It was in 1907 that for the first time legislation requiring Estate authority to provide educational facilities for the children of an Estate labourer was first made[3]. When I visited Ceylon in 1963, I went round some of the Estate Schools in Nuwara Eliya. In terms of furniture, buildings, library, and teaching staff, the conditions of these schools were deplorable. How much more so deplorable the state of affairs must have been 30 or 40 years earlier, can easily be guessed. Now, most of the children in these schools are Tamil. The Tamil political leaders miss no opportunity to condemn the Government for the neglect of these schools. It would thus appear that the Sinhalese were dissatisfied with the British rule because they felt their education had been neglected; the Tamils were not very happy either because they felt that their children's education was being neglected in the Estates. After meeting some of the

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1. Ibid. paras 29-34.
2. Sessional Paper XVII. p.16.
3. Ibid. p.18.

Tamil political leaders in Ceylon, my impression is that they are hardly concerned with the question of education of the children of the Estate labourers. They feel no genuine anxiety, and they only talk of it in order to win a point in the continuous dialogue with the Government, which is now determined to follow the policy of Swabasha and of Buddhism as the State religion. All this is clearly a legacy of the British rule. We cannot do better than quote from the Report of the National Education Commission of Ceylon, 1961, regarding the effects of the British policy on education and its influence on the Indo-Ceylon relations:

> " But from 1505, over the long period of colonial rule alienating tendencies were introduced, disrupting the cultural pattern of the country and within the population, setting up one section above and as apparently superior to the rest. Fortunately with the maturing of the political and social awareness of the people these alienating trends are on the ebb. It is, therefore, necessary that a unified national system of education should pay attention to the development of the cultural aspirations of the people which can make for sympathy and cohesion among the people of the country. This common ground of cohesion should find expression consciously or subconsciously nearly in every activity of the people, its art, architecture, literature, its system of law, government, and education; its habits and manners, its food and clothing, family life, sports and its use of leisure. It is this aggregate of a nation's activity that gives it unity and inspiration for advancement; without it the nation becomes a headless trunk, without expression, direction and destination.
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> Today Ceylon finds itself in this predicament. The people have been wrenched away from that cohesive force of culture, although they have had a highly developed form of culture of their own, before they were suppressed by foreign invaders. The culture and civilisation

which had been nurtured and painfully developed over 2,000 years was subjected to the most severe test the country has ever had during her entire previous history. She is now emerging from the ill-effects of that dark age of foreign rule and suppression. Therefore, a regeneration of those lost cultural values should bring unity, greatness, and purity to the nation"(1).

§ 12

CULTURAL REVIVAL : PRESS, FILMS, AND FINE ARTS

A marked revival of Ceylonese culture began in the last quarter of the 19th century; in this process, the forces from India had played a fairly prominent role. Initially this revival was a reaction against the proselytising activities of the Christian Missions. After 1880, both Buddhism and Hinduism received a shot in the arm from an unexpected quarter. In the United States of America, the Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky, a Pole, and Colonel Olcott, an American, with a view to promoting the study of Oriental religion. Olcott was strongly attracted by Buddhism and in 1880, he founded the Buddhist's Theosophical Society of Ceylon, of which the primary objective was to establish Buddhist schools[2]. In course of time, the first school started by this Society in 1886 grew into the famous Ananda College. In the North of Ceylon, the Jaffna Hindu College sprang up. Meanwhile, the Girls' Secondary School and a few Teachers' Training Colleges were also established. In 1906, a Ceylon University

1. Sessional Paper. XVII-1962. p.21.
2. Pakoman. op. cit. p.101.

Association was founded, and in 1921, the Ceylon University College came into existence. Until the Second World War, it continued to be affiliated to the London University. The cultural revival of Ceylon after 1900 was also accelerated as a reaction to the arrogant attitude of the European community in Ceylon[1]. According to one authority, the European community had developed almost into a caste with hardly any social relations with the people of Ceylon[2]. There were undoubtedly exceptions both in India as well as in Ceylon. But, by and large, a marked degree of exclusiveness characterized the conduct of the Europeans. The situation may be illustrated by feference to the Colombo Club for Men, a club of the type found in the Capital city of most colonies as well as in the big business centres of India. This club, which functions even today, and which I saw in my visit to Ceylon, occupies just about the finest site in Ceylon near the sea front. Now it was not possible till after 1946 for any member of this club to invite any Ceylonese to enter its portals even as his guest, much less to become a member of it[3]. (In India, the Calcutta Swimming pool bars the Indian entry even today). This one fact was a constant and underlying cause of resentment to the educated Ceylonese.

The arrogance and exclusiveness characteristic of the European behaviour considerably affected those classes

1. Ibid. p.102.
2. Saul Rose: op. cit. Chap. 4. Also refer to K.M.Panikkar: Asia and Western Demonance. Chap. 3.
3. Ralph Pieris: Traditional Sinhalese Culture Colombo. Chap.I.

in Ceylon which had been Westernized. Gradually, however, the intellectuals realised that a great damage had already been done to Ceylon's culture. As the pace of independence quickened and the prospect of the exit of the British rule brightened up, a revivalist movement developed. The process was actively helped by the introduction of rapid means of communication and transport. The Railways had been a factor of mobility in a hitherto largely immobile society; the motor bus accelerated this very greatly. Parallel developments can be noticed in India. Cinemas now began to go round in mobile vans; while there were few Sinhalese films, the Indian films in Tamils and even in Hindi became extremely popular. No sooner was a Hindi film released in Delhi or Bombay than it could be seen in Ceylon[1]. The growing Press was an active agency in the process of cultural revival and in re-establishing lost contacts between India and Ceylon. The first independent newspaper started in 1834 was the Observer, followed 12 years later by the Times of Ceylon. After 1850, newspapers in Sinhalese and Tamil began to be published. In 1918, Wijewardana, an active political worker, bought a Sinhalese newspaper, and soon started an English Daily - the Ceylon Daily News. In 1923, he took over the Observer and founded a Company, the Associated Newspapers of Ceylon, popularly known as the Lake House Press[2]. Most of the editors of Ceylon newspapers were in constant touch with the leading

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1. Report of the Film Enquiry Committee. Sessional Paper II 1958. Colombo. Chap.2.
2. Pakeman. op. cit. p.112.

journalists of India. The role played by the Ceylon Daily News in the struggle for independence in Ceylon, is very much similar to the part played by newspapers like the Hindustan Times and the Amrit Bazar Patrika in India[1].

With the revived interest in Ceylon's past, there developed a keen interest in the traditional music, and dancing, painting and other forms of fine arts. Kandyan dancing, exclusively by men in their traditional and picturesque dress, had, in fact, never died out in the Island, being kept up by a special caste with specially trained teachers. During the thirtees, it was realised that the Ceylonese dance had close affinity with the Indian forms[2]. The effects of the British rule on fine arts in Ceylon had been disastrous. As Mr. Molamure puts it:

> " The British were incapable of replacing that which they had destroyed with a system compatible with and suited to the temperament and psychology of the people, their customs and institutions in which they had their being. Nor had they the comprehension or sympathy with the indigenous arts which might have enabled them to step easily and naturally into the position of benefactors and patrons of national art. All the while, shoddy influences from 19th century Europe and its commercialism were at work undermining the taste of a people, rendered peculiarly vulnerable by the circumstances of an historical situation"(3).

The characteristic features of the Kandyan dancing bear a close resemblance with the principal Indian forms[4]. One of these is the combination of song and dance by the

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1. This point was brought out sharply in my discussion with Mr. K.V.S.Vars Chief Editor of the Virakesari and another gentleman associated with the Ceylon Observer who wishes to remain anonymous.
2. International Seminar on Traditional Cultures in South East Asia. 1960. pp.135 ff.
3. The Outlook For Kandyan Dancing. p.25.

performer. The dance does not represent or interpret the content of the song, which constitutes a melodic accompaniment to the movement danced. The songs, however, contribute to the total effect of pleasure created in an audiance appreciative of the quality of the singing, the technical skill in versification and the freshness in presentation of themes. They draw their themes from episodes in the life of the Buddha and the Jataka stories or celebrate the exploits of a king or notable personage (Srinama) or describe a God and his abode. Many deal with the sentiment of love (Sringara). The "talam pota" (a pair of small cymbals) beats out the time measure while in "Pantera" and "Ves" drummers supply the music for dancing which is predominantly percussive[1]. The drums (gata bera) tuned to a different pitch at each end and played by a man standing up with the drum slung around his waist, produce an extraordinary range of powerful rythms and are capable, in expert hands, of a wide variety of subtle and complicated effects. The vigour of the dancing is matched as well as balanced and controlled by the drumming, sound and gesture becoming one[2]. In comparison the use of the drum in the West is elementary, relegated to a very subordinate position in an orchestra[3]. The affinities of the Kandyan dancing with Indian forms are unmistakable, probably indicative of a common source. The evident dissimilarities

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1. Tapping of the body to gauge state of emotion.
2. Malamure. op. cit. p.31.
3. Ellawala, Banda: Kandyan Dancing and Music. Times of Ceylon. Nov.20, 1949.

are such that Kandyan dancing may be regarded as a distinct species, possessing in its own right the attributes of refinement and distinction associated with such highly evolved Indian forms, as Kathakali and Bharata Natyam[1].

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1. At present the most important schools of dance in India are the Bharata Natyam, Kathakali, Kathak and Manipuri. There are also the Garba of Gujarat, Chow of Seraikela, Santhal dances of the Santhals, and other folk-dances peculiar to almost every province. Tamil Nad is now the home of Bharata Natyam, which among all the Indian dances, as now practised, follows most closely the Natyashastra. Bowers declares that Bharata Natyam "while being India's most brilliant dance, is also the most classic". All the four elements of classical dance, namely angika (gestures), vachika (words), sattvika (representation of feeling) and aharya (costumes) are used effectively in the Bharata Natyam. Bharata Natyam has been preserved through oral or rote tradition and taught by the Nattuvanars, or masters. It was held for a long time that Bharata Natyam was originally meant for women only and was, therefore, practised exclusively by them. Ramgopal was the first male dancer to perform Bharata Natyam, and now both males and females follow this school.

   Kathakali is the pantomimic dance-drama of Kerala, the soft little region of the extreme south with its exuberantly verdant fields and tall coconut trees. It has been claimed that "the origin of Kathakali may be traced to the ritualistic period of the Vedic age", but for all practical purposes it may be said to have been introduced by the Raja of Kottarakkara (A.D.1575-1650). The main sentiment displayed in the Kathakali is heroism (vira rasa) with its emphasis on the terrific (bhayanaka). Hence women play no part in it, their roles being acted by men, who either wear elaborate masks or appear heavily painted. Kathakali is a dance-drama, a ballet in the sense that several characters appear on the stage at the same time and that one person appears in one role and retains it throughout the entire evening. It may also be held generally that Bharata Natyam depicts the "lasya" dance while Kathakali portrays or exhibits "tandava". Hence the former is a dance for women and the latter a dance for men. But just as men are taking up Bharata Natyam, female Kathakali dancers are also known. The most famous Kathakali dancer of recent times has been Gopinath, the palace-dancer of Travancore whom Tagore once described as a "real artist".

   The Kathak school of dancing has mixed "tandava" and the "lasya" and depends for its effect on a peculiar

Its technique is stylised, developed far beyond the stage of merely 'folk' and exemplifies an aristocratic and classical tradition inherited from the past although its exponents are peasant cultivators, not solely dependent for their livelihood on the profession of dancing. The basic position assumed by a dancer is a strenuous one with knees bent onward, wide apart and in line with the body. The structure of the dance consists of spatial movement in which abstract, decorative gestures are co-ordinated with swift patterned footwork, bringing into play every part of the body without disturbing the aesthetic balance of the whole. Unlike in India, no conscious use is made of 'mudras' and 'abhinaya', intended as such to convey a meaning or suggest a mood or idea. In fact, the movement is pure dance (nrit) unmixed with expressive or dramatic action[1]. Its predominant quality is tandava, masculine, heroic, epitomising the supple strength and sinewy grace of the male[2]. The dance is performed by a team or set of men, usually five or six in a row, trained to move in unison,

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technique which a competent critic calls, "foot gymnastics". The Kathak dancers pay great attention to foot work strictly following the rhythmic accompaniment of tabla, whose reverberations are reproduced by the jingling of bells attached to the anklets worn by the dancer.

The dance of Manipur influenced Rabindranath Tagore in 1917 and led to the revival of modern Bengali dancing. The real Manipuri dance, however, depends exclusively on the Radha-Krishna songs of medieval Bengal made popular by Shri Chaitanya for the Manipuris belong to his sect which was once declared to be the state religion. Therefore, the Manipuris dance in a circle or in a semi-circle, in imitation of Krishna's Rasa dance known in Manipur as Ras.

1. Ellawala, Benda: Kandyan Dancing and Music. Times of Ceylon. Nov.27, 1949.
2. Keyt, George: Kandyan Dancing. Times of Ceylon. Annual, 1953, p.6.

solo dancing being a recent innovation[1]. Until a few years ago women took no part in dance performances other than the "digge natima" - dance now extremely rate - which formed part of the ritual service attached to certain devales or shrines of localised Hindu gods[2].

The resemblance of the Ceylonese dancing with the Indian is more remarkable in the sphere of the folk dances as distinguished from classical dances[3]. Unlike classical dances, the folk dances are performed for the sheer pleasure of the particular folk and that of the participants. Since the people of the particular community perform it for their own entertainment, they are not subject to the process of cultivation, artificialities, and sophistication. In India there are innumerable communities, almost every one of which preserves its distinct culture and its own dance. Folk dances are, therefore, peculiar to each community, although they manifest no deviation from the original and primordial forms of dancing. Folk dances can be classified on the basis of the number of participants in the dance (solo-dance and group dance); they can also be classified on the basis of the sex of the participants (women dances, men dances and mixed dances). On the basis of special occasions, on which dance performances are given, they can be divided into religious dances and leisure-pleasure dances. On the basis of region, folk dances can be

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1. Ibid. p.8.
2. Sederaman, J.E: A primer of Kandyan Dancing. p.21.
3. International Seminar on Traditional Cultures. p.141. UNESCO. 1960.

classified into plain folk dances and hill-folk dances[1]. In Ceylon, the folk dances are broadly divided in two categories - (a) Secular, primarily intended for exhibition and to entertain and give pleasure by the display of talent and skill, and in its higher form, to produce aesthetic satisfaction; (b) the ritualistic in purpose whether propitiatory or magical or expressive of worship[2]. The former is called as udakki and panteru; the latter as yes. During the thirties yes was adopted for secular use by drawing from and elaborating the pure dance portions as distinct from its episodic sequences[3]. In all forms of Sinhalese dancing, time and rythm are maintained by the beating of drums of various shapes calculated to produce different tones. This is a characteristic influence of South India[4]. The feet are placed parallel to and not pointing towards the audience; this crude and awkward pose might well have been the outcome of the habit of bearing a drum from the waist.

Apart from the folk dances, there are also the demonological dances in Ceylon[5]. Their purpose primarily is to help the magician to work himself up to a frenzy. The dance is accompanied by dramatization both masked and otherwise. This again is similar to the magical dances found in some of the hilly regions of India. In Ceylon, the typical demonological dance is called as Yakun Nateema,

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1. Himalaya Kalpadruma. Vol.I No.1, April-June 1964. pp.48-50.
2. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.115.
3. Molamura. op. cit. Chap.3.
4. Ibid.
5. Sederaman: Sinhala Natya Kala. Kandy. 1944. p.10.

in which the personification of the spirit concerned is complete[1]. This bears close resemblance with some of those dances which can still be seen performed on the grave of the so-called "peers" in different parts of India. Again, dancing is associated with the ceremonial and ritual of the devales. They are occasional performances staged in the devale precincts and consist of mild rythmic movements. They remind one of the dances performed by the deva dasis in some of the temples in South India. Finally, a semblance of dancing is indulged in during acrobatic performances for easing the limbs. Time is kept by the beat of the drum. The Western mode of dancing can be seen both in India and Ceylon in highly Westernized circles. After 1940, a new Indian influence captured the imagination of the Sinhalese- Tagore and his school of Shanti Niketan have been solely responsible for capturing the music of Ceylon, while Udai Shanker and Menaka, the dance[2].

Closely connected with the dancing are drama and music. In order to appreciate the impact of the Indian drama on that of Ceylon, it is necessary to keep in mind some of the important elements of the Indian drama. In India from the earliest times in her history, atleast more than two thousand years ago, the art of drama seems to have been well established. Scholars have tried to trace its development in Sanskrit back to the Vedas. That is

1. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.117.
2. Ibid. p.217.

only natural, since the Vedas, in the absence of other literary documents, form the fins et origo of Indian literature. In the Rig Veda, for instance, we find a very remarkable series of dialogue hymns in which two or more characters address each other in verses which are looked upon in orthodox Vedic tradition as having been composed by the characters or personages themselves, who are ordinarily superhuman or divine. Thus the famous Pururavas and Urvasi hymn[1] (Rig-Veda, X 95) embodies one of the most romantic stories in literature - that of the love of a mortal hero for a heavenly nymph, and the story unfolds in the course of a conversation between the hero and the heroine, which takes place at a crucial point in the story itself when the hero meets his long-lost love, only to lose her again, perhaps for ever. But this tragic ending was later modified by a promise on the part of the divine heroine to meet her human lover again, and an actual fulfilment of that promise. Here we have capital material for a drama which is certainly not religious but fundamentally romantic[2].

The Vedic Aryans, therefore, had a kind of crude drama which utilised traditional story-material. The story which was well known to the people was thus unfolded by means of dialogue[3]. In later times, as the mixed Hindu people was formed through the fusion of the Aryan and the non-Aryan elements in the Indian population, everything

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1. Quoted in Indian Drama: Chatterji, S.K. p.5.
2. Ibid. p.6.
3. Ibid. p.7.

came to fit in with a scheme of mythology and a background of religion and philosophy. The other forms of art which were developing at the time began to reinforce the tradition of this primitive dialogue-drama. An art of puppet plays appears also to have developed in India at least a couple of centuries before Christ, and possibly earlier, and the dialogues which were intoned by the performers manipulating the puppets with their strings (sutradhara) certainly gave a decided impetus to the emergence of the drama, truly speaking, in ancient India[1]. The dev-dasi, the temple dancer, and a young girl dedicated to the gods, would naturally have drama as her proper vocation. Some of the earliest specimen of drama in ancient India are found in the fragments of some Buddhistic dramas attributed to Asvaghosh, the court poet of Kanishka (I-II century A.D.)[2]. These indicate the formation of the Indian drama type. Even before Kalidasa, who flourished in about 400 A.D., there were a number of other dramatic poets, whose names were recorded by Kalidasa himself. Among these was the great Bhasa who, according to latest researches, wrote 13 dramas and lived in the extreme South of India, Kerala[3]. The name of Sudraka may also be mentioned and he was the author of the famous "Little Clay Cart". Bhava Bhuti lived in the 8th century and was an important dramatist.

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1. Ibid. p.6.
2. David's Rhys: Buddhist India. Chap. IX-X.
3. Chatterji. op. cit. p.9.

The most important elements of the Indian drama were music, dance, an eleborate stage, an orchestra, and mask. According to the tradition of Sanskrit drama, the more exhorted characters speak in Sanskrit and the others speak in a variety of languages[1]. With the advent of the Muslims, in both North as well as South India, a new tradition came into vogue. In the North, it expressed itself in the Gita Govind of Jaya deva[2]. A noteworthy feature of this type was that the themes were taken from the Sanskrit epics and the Puranas and also from the folk epics current in Eastern India, as for example, the story of Raja Gopi Chand Bhartari and his mother Queen Mainamati[3]. This variety, in course of time, became popular in Nepal also. In the 19th century Indar Sabha became a popular theme. In South India, special types of dance-drama sprang up and all of them represented the Hindu tradition[4]. It was dance rather than drama proper which attracted the attention of creative artists there. Thus we have in Kerala the Kathakali, a kind of classical dance-drama with masks as well as the elaborate painting of the faces.

In the eightees and ninetees of the last century, drama in South India, was, really speaking, looked down upon not only for its lack of any intrinsic

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1. Dasgupta, S.N: Fundamentals of Indian Art. Chap.3.
2. Ibid.
3. Munshi, K.M.(Ed): Indian Inheritance. Vol.II. Chap.VII.
4. Panikkar, K.M: "South India". Ibid. pp.168 ff.

value, but for the lack of character, respectability, and purity. The performance often took place on the outskirts of the village called as the "Kalathumedu"[1]. The stage was most perfunctory, illumination was primitive and the auditorium was simply Mother Earth. The performance inveriably took place after 10 P.M. and continued till dawn. Acting was crude; costumes were funny; make-up was ridiculous. It was the face alone which was made up, the rest of the body retaining its natural colour. The plot was traditional; the story was in the Puranik setting[2]. The total stock of plots or themes hardly exceeded a dozen, the principal of which were Raja Harish Chandra, Savitri and Satyavan and Draupadi. There was always plenty of music to be sung by almost every character, including servants[3]. There was no text of the speaking part; having no written script, there was no need for a prompter. The level of production was primitive.

At about this time, the position of the Sinhalese drama, or the Tamil drama in Ceylon was roughly the same as that in South India[4]. There were some shadow plays references about which can be found in the Mahavamsa[5]. The art of puppetry has been known in Ceylon from the very distant past. Indian literature also, specially Sanskrit literature, contains many a reference to puppets and other animated figures, which were used both as a means of

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1. Gopalratnam, V.C: "Tamil Drama", Indian Drama. pp.99 ff.
2. Ibid. p.100.
3. Ibid. p.101.
4. Ibid. p.102.
5. Tilakasiri, J: Puppetry in Ceylon. Eastern World. IX/3, March 1955.

amusement and as a medium of magic in ancient India[1]. It is universally accepted in Ceylon that like many of the other ancient arts and crafts of Ceylon, puppetry also came from India[2]. In parts of South India, it is very popular even today. The practice of puppetry in Ceylon is today confined to an area in the South of the Island - Ambalangoda - where several troupes of puppeteers lay claim to a continuous tradition[3]. In the distant past, puppet shows were put up at street corners, junctions and under trees in the towns and villages, where passersby had free entertainment in much the same way as the French village folk showed their appreciation of "Marionette shows". In Ceylon, from the very beginning, string puppetry called Rukada has been in existence[4]. During the 18th and 19th centuries, because of lack of patronage, puppetry as a dramatic art faded both in India as well as in Ceylon. With the cultural revival in both countries, more particularly after 1900, some of the ancient arts which had hitherto been neglected came to be restored. In Ceylon, Rukada came to be linked up with the Nadagama, a variety of folk drama, which was highly appreciated atleast upto 1930[5]. It was only in more recent years that people realised the damage which nadagama has done to rukada. After 1947, a separation between the two has been effected

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1. Ibid. p.62.
2. Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional Cultures. Part II. Madras. 1960. pp. 347 ff.
3. Tilakasiri. op. cit.
4. Tilakasiri: A Vanishing Art - Rukada. Ceylon Today II/10. 1953.
5. Ibid.

and puppetry is now coming to its own [1].

Whatever may be the origin of nadagama, it was certainly a communal effort of a village unit to organise a way of entertainment. Its revival in the earlier 20th century was the outcome of its revived introduction in South India [2]. Towards the end of the 19th century, the nadagama began to be superseded by drama. The introduction of musical airs borrowed from India dominated the play. The people liked the music and demanded more of it. The musical drama, therefore, became more popular. The satire, historical play, and Jataka story also acquired popularity. But just as in India, drama had become a back number, unworthy of the respectable classes, the bigger people shunned it in Ceylon also [3]. It was towards the closing decade of the 19th century that the first steps were taken in South India for removing the universal prejudice against drama. The credit for this goes to the amateur who stepped into the field and interested himself in various capacities as author, writer, artist, producer etc. In 1896, an institution came into existence in South India which pledged itself to the nursing and growth of the dramatic art. This was the Suguna Vilasa Sabha - an association established by a band of bold and enterprising young men of good families with high literary accomplishments to their credit [4]. The founder of this association was

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1. Ibid.
2. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.114.
3. Gopalratnam. p.101. Also see Wijesekera. p.115.
4. Gopalratnam. p.102.

Rao Bahadur P. Samvanda Mudalier, a magnificent actor himself and a peerless conductor and teacher. As a result of the activities of this Sabha, Tamil dramas began to be produced according to a plan satisfying the requirements of a proper stage; written texts were adhered to and attempts made to produce the effects intended by the author of the play. Rehearsals became a necessity and a regular feature, and a high standard was thereby ensured for the final production on the stage. A sense of discipline came to be inculcated and success was invariably achieved. In the course of the first 25 or 30 years of the existence of the Sabha, both by reason of work in the metropolis of Madras and the tours undertaken in the country, even in far-off Ceylon and Travancore, the amateur stage was built up and numerous other Associations devoted to the dramatic art began to be formed in Tamilnad, in fact wherever Tamilians lived or foregathered[1].

The amateur stage in both India and in Ceylon fully succeeded in driving out the so-called professional drama with all its objectionable features[2]. After 1930, it became a very rare occurrence; the better type of producers of the professional drama now began to immitate the methods of production employed by the amateurs[3]. They started and maintained dramatic troupes or companies conducted on approved lines. Both in South India and in Ceylon, the

1. Ibid. p.102.
2. Wijetunga, W.P: The Sinhalese Drama in Modern Times. Ceylon Observer, July 16, 1944.
3. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.119.

so-called Boys' Companies in which most of the actors were young boys, began to come to the centre of the stage[1]. The most recent and the most dangerous menace to the dramatic art in many countries of the world is the 'silver screen'. The Economic depression of the thirtees synchronized with the introduction of the film and created hurdles in the way of the profitable production of the stage drama. The rise in prices, following the second World War, taxation by the States, and the high cost of living - all helped to kill dramatic activities and by 1947, its decline in South India as well as in Ceylon was almost complete. It is only with independence that the drama in both countries experienced its revival[2].

Closely connected with drama is music. Even during the medieval period, nothing of a festival nature could pass in Ceylon without song and music. The popular musical instruments, some of which have now been discovered, endorse the feeling that what prevailed in those days, was a sort of folk music in Ceylon. This music consisted of the Horanava[3] and a variety of drums. The puberty of a girl,

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1. Gopalratnam. p.103.
2. Sarath Chandra, E.R.: The Sinhalese Folk Play and the Modern Stage. 1953. Chapters 2-5.
3. The following musical instruments have been popular in the history of Ceylon. It will be noticed that many of these are similar to those used in South India:-
    (a) Bere, a drum tapering at both ends, hung from the waist in a horizontal position and beaten with the palms of both hands. The right hand end is louder and higher in pitch than the left, which is lower in pitch. The Bere used at festivals is known as the magul bere (length approx. 28"). The latter, when made a little shorter, with the hide faces proportionately smaller, becomes the yak bere, employed in Bali and other

a wedding ceremony, and every kind of religious ceremony or festival, as well as the Pevaya (offering) in the temples was invariably attended with drums[1]. If epedemics visited a village, a Gam Maduva was held[2]. In order to

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ceremonies. In the low country this tapering drum is used in Madagam and is known as Maddala (vulgarly, Demala Bere). (b) Davula, a cylindrical drum hung from the waist in a horizontal position and beaten in slow time with a curved stick in the right hand, this beat being punctuated at intervals by a blow with the palm of the left hand (length approx. 16"). (c) Tammattama, a double kettle-drum beaten with two sticks, the extremities of which are bent back into loops. The left hand drum is taut and beaten in quick time with both sticks; the right hand drum is less taut, has a weak and muffled sound, and is used to punctuate the other (diameter approx. 7"). (d) Udakkiya, a small hand drum"shaped like an hour-glass", beaten with the fingers, the pitch being varied by the exercise of digital pressure on a band around the strings, connecting the extremities of the drum faces (length approx. 7"). (e) Tallaya, a gong, beaten with a stick and used by Kapuralas in Kumburu Tahanam (ceremony connected with agriculture). (f) Horanava or pipe: mouth-piece of Tala (palm) leaf, the middle of wood, the rest of brass. The piece of wood attached is to separate the bits of leaf forming the mouth-piece, and enlarge the orifice. The Kandyan pipe has between 5 to 7 holes, but only 3 notes are usually produced. (g) Vinava Violin, "has two strings of different kinds, one made of a species of flax and the other of horse-hair, which is the material also of the string of the bow, which with bells attached to it, is used as a fiddle stick. The hollow part of the instrument is half a coconut shell, polished, covered with the dried skin of a lizard, and perforated below" (Davy). There is a specimen in the Kandy Museum; the more sophisticated instrument in the Colombo Museum is very rare. (h) Kombuva, a curved horn. There is a large S-shaped specimen in Lankatilaka temple. (i) Panteruva, similar to the tambourine except that the centre is bare. (j) Bummadiya, "a drum used in agricultural festivities, the body made of pottery. The common pot (kala gediya) is inverted, and a cylindrical portion superimposed, the top of which forms the drum face and is covered with talagoya skin". There is a good specimen in the Ratnapura Museum. This drum is still used in certain villages in Udunuvara (Kandy District). (k) Saka (Hakgediya) conch-shell. (l) the Purampattuva or trumpet, as its name implies, was a relatively recent European innovation. Sinnam are types of trumpet. Davy's Ceylon. Also see Ralph Pieras (Ed): Traditional Sinhalese Culture, Colombo. pp.104-106.

1. C.M.Fernando: J.R.A.S.(C.B.).XIII/45, 1899.
2. de Silva: Ceremonial Songs of the Sinhalese Guardian

ensure health and prosperity, a periodical Devol ceremony was celeberated[1], which meant drums, songs and dance. There was even a funeral band. Even today, women in both India and in Ceylon, keep on singing while working in the fields, as men sing while making a road. The drums were in existence in the Island even before the coming of Vijaya. The Mahavamsa has several references about them. Most of the Ragas and Raginis prescribed in the classical music in India were known to the Sinhalese[2]. They must have gone to the Island through the Indian musicians of the Southern school. The story prevalent in Ceylon is that in the beginning God Visvakarma chose four notes. They were tat, dit, ton, nam. He took them from the sound of falling rain, the neighing of the horse, the trumpeting of the elephant, and the sound of a lion's challenge, respectively. The Deva Isvara split the four sounds into sixty-four and from these, gandarva musicians developed 216 notes. These same gandarvas staged their first performance in honour of the first Mahasammata ruler[3].

The modern Sinhalese song began with the dramas of John Silva. The airs to which he set his songs were mostly if not all, from the Indian Visvanath Laugi[4]. The accompaniment to his songs, were the imported seraphina (harmonium) and the tabla. The Indian vina was not seen in Ceylon till after 1915 or even later. Before the days of

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1. Mahawalatenna,B: Kandyan Music, J.R.A.S.(C.B.).XXI/61, 1908.
2. Dahanaike,D: Sinhalese Music. Monthly Literary Register. III. 1895.
3. Dolapihilla,P: "Sinhalese Music And Minstrelsy", Traditional Sinhalese Culture. p.35.
4. Ibid. p.36.

John Silva, songs were such as developed from the _vannam_ airs, or _kaffirinna_ in the Western Province[1]. The average man's musical instrument was the _dola_. In the Kandyan areas the _nakkiya_ was still popular. John Silva's object was to make the Sinhalese proud of their ancient history. His plays, however, had quite another effect. They swept away the _vannam_ songs and the _nadagam_ songs that had developed from the _vannam_, and gave the Sinhalese what Ratanjankar describes as "Sinhalese words set to Indian airs"[2]. Thus, like the mythical origin attributed to most things, singing and music like everything else, is traced to the land whence came the religion of the Sinhalese. Ratanjankar went to the extent of saying that the Sinhalese have no music of their own and that their songs, with the exception of the _vannam_, are all compositions set to Indian airs.

In the second chapter we have referred that Kasyapa had engaged bands of Indian musicians and dancers in his court at Sigiriya. Similarly, conquerers like Elara brought to Anuradhapura Indian music and Indian instruments. The ancient tradition continues even today; and as we stated earlier, even in the Sinhalese films, the exact tunes of the Indian songs is repeated. Even some of the educated people in Ceylon believe that they are the original tunes of Ceylon. The impact of the Indian music can be felt by any observer in the modern Sinhalese songs.

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1. Wijesekera. p.117. He writes that "the Indian instruments, chief among them being the tabla, violin, and seraphina have almost become naturalized in Ceylon".
2. Prof. S.N.Ratanjankar (an Indian) was invited by Ceylon Government to enquire into the quality of Sinhalese musical broadcasting in 1946.

The same words are repeated over and over again to give one the Hindustani air to which the words are set [1]. It may be mentioned that this is a departure from the Ceylonese tradition; repetitions do not occur in the _Vannam_ songs at all. After 1947, a deliberate effort has been made by intellectuals of Ceylon to revive the ancient Ceylonese tradition. As Mr. Dolaphille puts it: "To my ear, the foreign instrument and the Sinhalese song set to Hindustani airs are sweet, but I prefer to hum a _vannam_ to while away an idle moment" [2]. While this effort is commendable, it must be stated that the Indian music has been fully absorbed in the music of Ceylon. As Mr. Wijesekera says: "The Indian instruments, chief among them being the tabla, violen and seraphina, have almost become naturalized" [3].

The art of painting [4] has been connected with magic from ancient times in Ceylon. The Sinhalese painting is preserved among certain communities, whose hereditary vocation is the decoration of temples - painting the temple and _bali_ images. Those who paint the temple are Sittaru, while the _bali_ painters are called as the _Bali Eduro_. Bali painting is a traditional art, where the images are moulded out of fine soft clay so as to present a frontal view only. The surface is first painted white and when the white paint is about to dry, the other

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1. Wijesekera. op. cit. p.118. Also refer to the International Seminar on Traditional Cultures. UNESCO. Madras. pp.140-141.
2. Sinhalese Music And Minstrelsy. p.44. Also refer to Kapukotuwa, S.L.B: Sinhala Vannam. Colombo. 1934.
3. Op. cit. p.117.
4. For a detailed account of Indian Painting refer to Havell, E.B: "Indian Painting". Indian Inheritance. Vol.II.

natural colours are then applied. The wall paintings of the temples are executed with the greatest care both in the preparation of the mural surface and the portrayal of the figures in relief or flat [1]. It must be remembered that the Kandyan temple painting is not a folk art; this is a work of certain castes, in whose families the art is traditionally handed down [2]. During the colonial period, the traditional paintings and traditional painters were totally neglected. There was no more than an occasional job available to a traditional painter, and as a result, it was only a very rare person that would even think of learning the technique. It was very rare for a father to permit his son to adopt painting as a profession, knowing how insecure it was. The Sittaru, particularly, were not given any social status at all [3]. When Ceylon became independent, it was stated by experts that there were not in Ceylon more than 10 painters of any repute [4]. The position of cloth painting was no better [5]. Practically the same technique was used here as involved painting. During the thirties and forties, the Indian cloth painting began to have its influence on the Island [6]. Acknowledging this, Wijesekera wrote in 1946 :

> " Fortunately signs of Indian inspiration are visible in the technique of painting. A new orientation is on the horizon for the revival of Sinhalese art and painting among the artisan classes. The Eastern school of modern

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1. Nell, A: Sinhalese Wall Paintings. Ceylon Observer Pictorial. 1938.
2. Coomaraswamy,A.K: "The Nature of Buddhist Art" in the Wall Paintings of India, Central Asia, and Ceylon. Boston. 1938.
3. de Fonseka,L: The Truth of Decorative Art. London. 1913. Chap.IV.
4. Gunasinghe,S: Kandyan Painting. p.49.
5. Wijesekera,N.D: Ancient Cloths of Ceylon. Ceylon Today. II/7, 1953.
6. Coomoraswamy.A.K: Notes on Painting. Dyeing. Lacwork.

> Indian painting practised at cultural centres such as Bengal and Santiniketan will greatly influence not only Ceylonese painting but also the temple painting of today. Kelaniya temple has already given a lead in this new activity. There the spirit and technique of Ajanta breate again"(1).

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CONCLUSIONS

What conclusions can we draw from this survey of the cultural contact between India and Ceylon ? It is said that all culture is founded on religion. The first artistic expression of man was probably the dance; but if he danced, it was not at first from a lyric impulse, but from a vague emotion aroused by the spectacle of the heavens. It may broadly be stated that just as Indian culture is really Hindu culture, with a veneer of Mughal influence, so the Sinhalese culture is Buddhist. With communications between India and Ceylon being easy and frequent, one may infer that there must have been much borrowing from each other, and much exchange of talent and tools. Society in Ceylon developed more or less on lines similar to those in India. Both were agricultural, caste-ridden and based on the joint family. Even in matters of government and administration, the Indian system was followed. As we write in the next chapter, Ceylon had accepted the monarchical form of government at a very early date. In respect of administrative organisation, methods of

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1. The People of Ceylon. pp. 122-23.

taxation, the organisation of the Royal Court, and the structure of the army, Ceylon generally followed India[1]. In both countries, Custom was the King[2]. The ancient kings both of India and Ceylon were, on the whole, not law-makers and as a rule followed custom. Custom in Ceylon till the 16th century, was not very different from that of India as the social background in both was similar.

Secondly, the cultural influences and interactions were on the whole, one-sided. And as Mr. Mendis puts it, "there was only a one-way movement in the direction of Ceylon"[3]. It is true that Ceylon developed a commentary literature on the Pali Canon in Sinhalese, which was translated into Pali for the use of the Buddhist monks in the sub-continent. There is also evidence of missionary work in India by the Theravada monks of Ceylon. An inscription at Nagarjunikonda shows that Ceylon monks spread their faith in North India and the Deccan. One may even recall the devoted work done by the Ceylonese monk Angarika Dharam Pala (1864-1933) for the revival of Buddhism in India and for resuscitating the glory of sacred places like Sarnath, Sanchi and Bodh Gaya. Dharam Pala first visited India in 1883 and his work for the revival of Buddhism began in right earnest in 1890 when he paid his second visit to this country[4]. But we have no evidence to show how far literature or the activities of the Ceylon

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1. Mendis, G.C: Ceylon Today and Yesterday. p.29.
2. Ibid. p.30.
3. Ibid. p.30.
4. N.I.Patrika. Oct. 26, 1964. pp.1-5.

monks influenced Buddhism in India[1]. Thirdly, the introduction of Theravada Buddhism in the Island during the 3rd century B.C. brought to Ceylon a new form of Indian religion and newer aspects of civilization; it continues to be the most important factor in the social life of the Island. It is important to emphasise that Buddhism became closely interwoven with the culture of the Sinhalese which was basically Hindu. On the one hand, it did not eliminate the old religious cults and even the old Vedic and Puranic gods; and, on the other, it was influenced constantly by religious movements in India. The circumstance that a large number of Tamils from South India continued to come to the Island for various reasons, kept up the prominent Hindu tradition in Ceylon. The development of Buddhism in Ceylon, therefore, has been within the framework of Hindu traditions and values. The belief in transmigration and Karma is universal in the Island, leaving out, of course, the Christians. Even the Bhakti movement in India with its stress on the element of devotion and the doctrine of Prasada (grace) had a deep impact on the Island. Sanskrit language had a fairly powerful appeal in Ceylon upto the 6th century A.D. From the 9th century onward, Hinduism of South India with its emphasis on Vaishnavism and Saivaism influenced Ceylon most. North Indian influence practically ceased with the invasion of the Muslims.

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1. Mendis, op. cit. p.30.

Fourthly, with the British occupation of India, the influence of Hinduism and Sanskrit receded into the background. But the revival of Hinduism in India influenced Hinduism in North Ceylon and Buddhism in the South. The cultural revival which led partly to the independence of India affected Ceylon in the spheres of dancing, painting, music and drama. Since independence, Ceylon has begun to lean once more on India as it has not done since the 16th century. In the 16th century, Ceylon ceased to be a unit of the Indian civilization because of the intrusion of the West and also because of the decline of Buddhism in India. Ceylonese Buddhists, therefore, began to turn away from India to Burma where Theravada Buddhism flourished. When North India and the Deccan fell into the hands of the Muslims, they ceased to exercise any influence over the Island in as much as it could no longer look to India for inspiration. From the 16th century onwards, emphasis in Ceylon was put on Buddhism and the Sinhala language. Both these factors began to fill a vacuum in the life of the Sinhalese people. After the cultural links between India and Ceylon were snapped, the learned men in Ceylon, mainly interested in Therevada Buddhism, the canon of which was in Pali, began to ignore Sanskrit altogether. Even for the purposes of literature, the use of the Sinhalese language became popular in Ceylon. Thus, from the 16th century onwards Ceylon began to deviate from India both in respect of religion as well as language.

But it must be emphasised that already a sort of a synthesis had taken place between Buddhism and Hinduism. The Hindu gods had been accepted in the Island. The introduction of the Roman Catholic Church in Ceylon was mainly responsible for creating serious rift between the Sinhalese and the Tamils. Once the Tamil population of the Island becomes conscious of the danger posed by the Catholic Action, the existing bitterness between the Indian population and the Ceylonese people may disappear or at least diminish considerably. The removal of the British Government from India and Ceylon in 1947 removed the serious hurdles in the direct contact between the two countries. What remained, however, was the legacy of bitterness, mutual fears and apprehensions between the Tamils and the Sinhalese in Ceylon.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDO-CEYLON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL TRADITION

§ 1

THE DIVINE ORIGIN CONCEPT IN INDIA.

It is not difficult to see that monarchy has been the common form of government both in India and Ceylon. In the case of India, this continued down to 1949 when India became a Republic; in the case of Ceylon, it continues even today. When Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh arrived in Ceylon on April 10, 1954, they were given a rapturous welcome. Sir John Kotelawala writes in his memoirs:

> "There has always been a genuine affection for royalty among the people of my country, and their loyalty to the British throne for nearly 150 years could never be questioned. The Sovereign who now came to them was not a symbol of foreign rule. She came as Queen of Ceylon and all her other realms and territories. She was not in any sense a representative of the United Kingdom. She was our chosen Queen. We had kings and queens in our history long before England did. D.S. Senanayake once told a Commonwealth Conference that he represented the oldest monarchy in the Commonwealth. It is my own belief and hope that Ceylon will always remain within this Commonwealth, and that it would prefer to recognize its head as a Queen or King rather than become a republic". (1).

When Queen Elizabeth visited India in 1961, even a Republican India went almost wild with enthusiasm. Wherever she went, literally millions of people accorded her a spontaneous welcome. This is a positive proof that in both India and

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1. An Asian Prime Minister's Story. p.112.

Ceylon monarchy is deeply rooted in our political tradition.

For a good length of time, it was believed in both countries that the King is a representative of God on earth. In the following paragraphs we advance the argument that even though the Sinhalese had been converted to Buddhism, the Buddhist political theory according to which the State is not a divine institution but is based on contract, did not find much favour with the intellectuals and rulers of Ceylon; and that that Indian political tradition according to which the State is of divine origin had, by and large, been accepted in Ceylon. References may be quoted from Sanskrit authorities like the Manusmriti and the Mahabharata, in support of the divine status of the king. It may be suggested that, while certain Mahayana schools accepted this doctrine, Buddhism in general discouraged it. The Buddhists lay greater emphasis on Dharma than on Danda, and the Universal monarch of their conception conquers the world without resort to force and rules in a non-violent way. This would seem to imply that the Buddhists had begun to think seriously of the political implications of the concept of non-violence and had put forward a theory of kingship based on this concept of non-violence[1]. Kingship in Buddhist literature is a human

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1. Gokhale, B.G: "Indian Thought Through the Ages. p.162. He adds: "The Buddhist theory also refers to the hypothetical golden age and the fall of man therefrom. But instead of interposing divine creation, the Buddhists stated that men got together and elected one from among them (Mahasammata) to be their king and agreed to pay taxes to him in return for his work of imposing law and order in the realm. In the context of this theory the state arises as a contract between the rulers and the ruled with the implication that the contract becomes null and void if one of the two parties refuses to abide by

institution not divine, the more so because of their agnosticism. In Ceylon, therefore, there would appear to be no possibility of the divine origin doctrine having much support. There appear, however, to have been occasions on which the doctrine influenced the course of political events in the Island in ancient times; here we may note the evidence bearing on the topic, and to interpret it in the light of Indian political theories and similar beliefs which seem to have been current in India. As the ancient culture and the political institutions of this Island were derived from India, such a study will not be without relevance. A study of common political institutions and traditions in both countries will be of immense help in resolving the existing problems, or at least in evaluating them.

In the paragraphs below we first examine the position of Kingship according to the Hindu political theories and, then, we deal with the corresponding ideas in Ceylon. That will fully establish our thesis that, in spite of the spread of Buddhism, the tradition of divine kingship is common to both India and Ceylon.

As stated earlier, monarchy was the normal form of government in India. There were, of course, some examples of the so-called republics or _ganas_, but in spite of all that has been written about them these institutions were hardly democratic. Since participation in government

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its terms. Since divinity has little relevance to the cosmological theories of the Buddhists it was natural that they explained the use of the state in purely human terms". pp.149-50.

was limited to higher caste male citizens, they could best be described as "tribal republics"[1]. Now, from the oldest days, the ancient Aryan god Indra represented kingship; he himself owes his appointment to the will of Prajapati, chief of the gods[2]. The King becomes the earthly embodiment of Indra or Danda[3]. In Vedic literature there is preserved an account which tells us that once there was a great conflict between the gods and demons. The demons being naturally crafty fought under the leadership of a commander, whereas the gods had no general to lead them effectively. Naturally, the gods were repeatedly defeated. They, then, considered the causes of their defeat, and concluded that if they were to be victorious against the demons they had to find a leader who would organize their forces in a disciplined way. They chose Indra (according to another version it was Soma who was so elected) and when they fought under his leadership they crushed the power of demons. Indra, then, became the king of the gods[4]. The leader in war thus became the king in peace time. In the Rig Veda the king is called Indra's companion and ardha-deva or semi-divine[5]. In the Atharva Veda king Parikshita is

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1. Bhandarkar: Ancient Hindu Polity. pp.110-121. Also see Masson - Oursel: Ancient India. p.98. Altekar: Women in Hindu Civilization. pp.218-219. Majumdar: The Vedic Age pp.512-513.
2. Coomaraswamy: Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power. Chap. 2.
3. Here it means "punishment".
4. See Taittiriya Brahamana, II, 2,2,2; Jaiminiya Brahmana, III, 152. Quoted in Gokhale. op. cit. p.148.
5. Rig Veda, III, 38, 4; IV, 22,6-7; 42, 8-9; X, 173, 174. Quoted in Gokhale. op. cit. p.151.

described as a god[1] and in the Shatapatha Brahmana a king is called the representative of Prajapati[2]. In later literature this line of reasoning is carried to its logical conclusion, implying that the king "derives his authority by virtue of the divine purpose of his creation and because his office is the symbol of that of the divine ruler"[3]. Householders are exhorted not to speak evil of the gods or the king[4]. Manu credits the king with the functions of eight distinct deities. To these we will shortly turn.

In the Mahabharata we come across the divine origin concept (incidentally the contract theory is also adumbrated in this book)[5]. Bhisma recounts how kingship was instituted when the world was in a state of nature (in the sense in which Hobbes uses the term). When people suffered untold misery arising from a state of anarchy, the Devas approached Vishnu and requested him to appoint a leader of men. Then from his mind sprang Virojasa, or Nirajas. But he did not wish for the overlordship of the earth. His son Kirtiman and his son Kavedema were of the same temperament. But Ananga, son of Kardama, ruled the people according to Danda Niti[6]. So also did his son Atibala. But his son Vena conducted himself badly by taking

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1. Atharva Veda, XX, 127, 7. Quoted in Gokhale. op. cit. p.219.
2. Shatapatha Brahmana, V, 4, 4, 5. Edited by A.Weber. 1855. Tr. J.Eggling.
3. Vashishta Dharmasutra, XIX, 8. Tr. K.Rangachari.
4. Apastamba Dharmasutra, II, 11, 28, 13; also I, 11, 31, 5. Tr. Rangachari.
5. Shanti Parva. Tr. P.C.Roy.
6. Dikshitar translates this term as the science and machinery of government. See V.R.R.Dikshitar, "Hindu Administrative Institutions". 1929. p.1.

to unrighteous ways. The sages had him killed by the use of a charm. Out of his right thigh sprang Nishadas and Mlechchas. Out of his right hand came Vanya, accoutred in military attire and versed in Dandaniti. He satisfied the sages by promising to rule according to the laws of Dharma and to render even-handed justice by looking upon friend and foe alike. On this the sages vested him with the office of kingship and appointed Sukracharya his priest, while the Valakhilya sages and Saravasta Ganas became his ministers. Garga was appointed astrologer, Sutas and Magadhas entered into their respective duties, and Vanya's government was an ideal government. Wealth and treasure flowed from the mines of the land and the ocean, as well as from mountains. Under his rule the whole earth was tilled and cultivated with seventeen kinds of grain. He first got the name Raja by giving his subjects the greatest amount of happiness[1]. He got the name Kshatriya for having freed the peoples from all their troubles. Under him again the earth became Prithvi for the king's name was Prithu. Even Lord Vishnu was pleased with his great acts and deeds, and entered his body. From that time onwards Prithu became infused with divinity[2].

Then, there is also the contract theory tradition in the Mahabharata, which would imply that kingship had a human origin. This is what we find in the Arthshastra also[3].

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1. The term Raja is sometimes supposed to mean one who brings happiness to subjects.
2. Mahabharata (Kumbakonam Edition) translated by P.C.Roy and M.N.Dutt, Santi Parva LVIII, 95-153; Niti Prakasa, ch.i, 26 ff.
3. Book I Ch. XIII, translated by Shamasastri. 4th Ed.1951.

The Mahabharata narrates how Manu became the first overlord of the earth. When anarchy showed its abhorred head, people felt the need for peace. Hence they entered into a compact among themselves to the effect that the boaster, the cruel man, the violator of woman's chastity and of agreements in general should be banished from the land so as to create ease and confidence among all communities. But still the arrangement was not fruitful. They appealed to Brahma who in turn appointed Manu, the best among men, to rule as well as reign. Manu realized to the full the responsibilities of overlordship and expressed his unwillingness to rule over a people addicted to untruth and all other sins. On this the people agreed to give one cow for every fifty cows sold or bought, one fifteenth of gold and one tenth of grains, besides an accomplished maiden in marriage and a number of armed men to follow him. In return they asked for peace and protection. Manu accepted the office and set out for conquest. People took to their own professions (Swadharma), and the social welfare of the world was accomplished[1].

There are, then, two schools with different traditions, one describing Manu as the first king, and the other Prithu as the first king. The two accounts appear to be contradictory. Dikshitar tries to explain it in this way. Both of them agree in the theory of an original state of nature, when the laws of nature were highly respected and adhered to. The original state of nature became in

1. Raja Dharma (Mahabharata) Chap. LXVII, 8-30.

course of time transformed into the Hobbesian state, when, on appeal, the creator appointed Prithu to rule over the earth for the preservation of social well-being, according to Samarangana Sutradhara and other texts. After the lapse, perhaps, of several centuries commencing with Prithu, there again set in a state of anarchy, another form of the state of nature when the practice of Matsyanyaya (might is right) held sway in the realm of mankind. It was so distressing that people elected from among themselves the best, viz. Vaivasvata Manu, as their overlord by entering into a contract with him. In this way he thinks that both the traditional accounts can be easily and satisfactorily reconciled. That Prithu was an earlier king than Vaivasvata Manu is evident from the fact that while there is a reference to Prithu in Vedic literature as the first of consecrated monarchs, there is no such reference to Vaivasvata Manu[1].

The monarch, however, appears as human and not divine in early Vedic literature. In the Rig Veda, for instance, the description of the monarch does not clothe him with divinity[2]. In the "soma" sacrifices dealt with in the Yajurveda and its Brahmanas, he, as the sacrificer, becomes identified with Prajapati or other deities during their performance, but this is only pro tempore, though it might have served as a factor towards the ultimate formation

1. Taittariya Brahmana (Anandasrma Sanskrit Series No.32). Krishna Yajurveda 1, 7, 7, 4. See Dikshitar, op. cit., pp. 17-18.
2. X. 60, 173, 174.

of the conception[1]. The conception emerges in the epics and becomes the nucleus for several other allied conceptions in those as well as other works. He is identified with several divinities[2]: Sukra, Brihaspati, Prajapati, Babhru (Vishnu), Fire, Vaisravana, Yama[3]. He is likened to a god[4] or to Prajapati[5] and is the personification of Dharma[6] (right and law) and Danda[7] (good government).

The deification of the king was preceded as early as the Satapatha[8] by the deification of the Brahmin who studied and taught the sacred lore and, thereby, also of the royal priest. The divinity of the king and of the Brahmins is also echoed in the law codes and later Sanskrit literature. In Manu, for instance, a Brahmin is an eternal incarnation of the sacred law, lord of all created beings, natural proprietor of all that exists in the world, others subsisting only through his benevolence[9]. Ignorant or learned, he is a great deity like Fire, whether carried forth for the performance of a burnt oblation or not, or

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1. Eggling (Sacred Books of the East) XLI, 108-10.
2. Mahabharata, iii 185, 26-330; 139, 103 ff. Cf. Ramayana ii, 122, 17 ff. See Hopkins (Journal of American Oriental Society, p.153).
3. Mahabharata, xii, 68, 41.
4. Ibid., iv, 4, 22.
5. Ibid., i, 49, 10.
6. Ibid., i, 49, 8.
7. Ibid., ii, 15, 34, Cf. Manu vii, 18. The Puranas (Histories) for instance Bhagavata Purana (14,26,27) identify the king with all divinities. As corollaries to his divinity may be mentioned the drama "Mudrarakshasa" (ii,7) which makes him the husband of Rajalakshmi (kingdom personified as a goddess) and Kalidas's poem Raghuvamsa (iii,62-5) which makes him the subduer of India.
8. Satapatha-Brahmana, ii,2,2,6 "Verily there are two kinds of Gods; for indeed the Gods are the gods; and the Brahmans who have studied and taught sacred lore are the human Gods.
9. Manu, i, 98-100; ix, 245. Sacred Books of the East Series. vol. XXV.

existing in a crematorium or a place of sacrifice[1]. Though employed in mean occupations, he should be honoured[2]. By his origin alone he is a deity even for the gods[3]. He is the creator of the world, the punisher, teacher, and hence benefactor of all creatures. He can create other worlds, other guardians of the world, and deprive the gods of their stations[4].

A king again is an incarnation of the eight guardian deities of the world, Moon, Fire, Sun, Wind, _Indra_, _Kuvera_, _Varuna_, and _Yama_: the Lord created the king out of the eternal particles of those deities for the protection of the universe[5]. Even an infant king should not be despised; a great divinity as he is in human form[6]. The taint of impurity does not fall on the king, for he is seated on Indra's throne[7]. This deification extends to public relations. The mutual public relations among the king and the four castes under his rule have been considerably influenced by such and other religious conceptions like the origin of the four castes from the mouth, arms, thighs, and feet which assign to each its particular rank[8]. The king, identified as he is with the aforesaid eight deities, has to emulate the actions of seven of them,

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1. Manu, ix, 317, 318; xi, 83.
2. Ibid., ix, 319.
3. Ibid., xi, 85.
4. Ibid., xi, 315, 316.
5. Ibid., vii, 3, 4; v. 96. See Sukraniti, i, 72.
6. Ibid., vii, 8.
7. Ibid., v, 93. It is interesting to note that in Kural a Tamil classic of 2nd century, A.D., translated by G.V. Popê, Rev. J.Lazarus and V.V.Iyer, there is no mention of divine origin of kings or of kingship.
8. Rig Veda, X, 90, 12.

excepting Kuvera with whom his identification is limited only to the possession of wealth. In addition, he has to emulate the earth's action. Like Indra pouring down copious rain during the rainy season, he should shower benefits on his kingdom. Like the Sun, imperceptibly drawing up water during the remaining eight months, he should gradually draw taxes from his realm. He should, through his spies, penetrate everywhere, like the wind, present as vital air in all creatures. He should, like Yama (God of the dead), exercise control over all his subjects, bringing under his rule both friends and foes. Like Varuna, penalising the sinner, he should punish the wicked. He should follow the Moon's example by being a source of joy to his subjects. He should be Fire in his wrath against criminals and wicked vassals, and should be the all-supporter Earth in giving support to all his subjects[1].

In short, the divine theory led to the consolidation of the powers of the state. This divinity was interpreted not in personal but institutional terms. There was the dread of anarchy which made the state an absolute necessity, and the state based on danda or force needed to be made moral, if it was going to be prevented from becoming an irrational and brute force. The divine theory was, thus, an attempt at making moral the power of the state. The state was divine, but divinity was associated with the person of the king only in a functional way.

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1. Manu, IX, 303-11.

So long as he acted according to the dictates of <u>dharma</u> the king had to be respected and obeyed; but when he ceased to abide by the rules of <u>dharma</u> he could no longer claim that divinity. Later this reasoning led to the acceptance of the right to revolution as a distinct political concept by ancient Indian political theorists.

§ 2

THE DIVINE ORIGIN CONCEPT IN CEYLON

The political doctrine of the Mahabharata[1] makes the king identical with a particular god, in accordance with the emphasis which one may place on this or that function of royalty. The god with whom a king is considered as identical may, therefore, vary according to time, place and circumstances. Kasyapa considered it politic to represent himself as <u>Kuvera</u> on earth[2]. A ruler of Ceylon before or after him may have endeavoured to be honoured by his subjects as another god[3]. And, in fact, if we interpret certain data in a number of ancient Brahmi inscriptions and in references in chronicles, in the light of the political doctrines which we have referred to, a good case can be made for the view that Vattagamani Abhya (104-77 B.C.) who ruled Ceylon some four centuries before, Kasyapa, wished to be taken by his subjects as Yama, a

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1. Mbh.XII, 68, 41 ff. The references are to the critical edition of the epic published by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
2. All India Oriental Conference (Annual Report) Vol.II. 1955. p.230.
3. Ibid.

colleague of Kuvera in the office of lokapala (regional protector)[1].

An inscription in an early type of the Brahmi script, found at Koravakgala near Situlpavuva in South Ceylon, records that the cave in which it is indited was fashioned and dedicated to the Sangha, in the reign of the king Tisa by a dignitary named Coma or Keema, the treasurer of Pita-maha-raja (Skt. Pita-maha-raja)[2]. The long inscription, or rather the series of inscriptions, on the pavement of the Dhakkhina Thupa at Anuradhapura usually ascribed to the third century on palaeographical grounds, refers at a number of places to that nomument as founded in the reign of Pita-maha-raja[3]. We know from the Mahavamsa[4] that the Dakkhina Vihara was founded in the reign of Vattagamani Abhaya. Pita-maha-raja, therefore, is no other than Vattagamani Abhaya. This conclusion is supported by the Koravakgala inscription when it states that a person who dedicated a cave in the reign of the king Tissa was the son of a dignitary, who held the office of treasurer in the reign of Pita-maha-raja, for Vattagamani was closely followed on the throne by his nephew Tissa, called Mahaculi Maha Tissa in the chronicle[5]. The identification is clinched by the Pali commentaries which, in their not infrequent references to the events of the

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1. R.A.S.C.B. Centenary Volume. pp.129-130.
2. Ibid. p.133.
3. A.I.O.C. (A.R.) 1948. p.9.
4. Chap. XXXIII, v.88.
5. A.I.O.C. (A.R.) op. cit. p.10.

reign of Vattagamani Abhaya, often call him Pituraja[1].

The facts that an inscription set up a few years after the death of Vattagamani Abhaya refer to him by the epithet of Pitamaharaja and that the traditions recorded by the Pali commentators as well as by the Dakkhina Vihara inscription knew him by that name, go to prove that in his life-time many of his subjects referred to him in that manner, The reason why such an unusual name was attached to him arouses our curiosity and the old chronicler, too, seems to have realised that an explanation was necessary. For, he refers to the title of Pita-raja (the prefix 'maha' appears to have been optional) borne by Vattagamani Abhaya and, moreover, he tells us how the king came to be known by it. Vattagamani Abhaya, we are told by the chronicler, adopted as his own son Mahaculi Mahatissa, the son of his elder brother Khalleta Naga. As he stood in the position of father to Mahaculi Mahatissa, Vattagamani Abhaya was called Piti-raja, 'the father king'[2].

This explanation, though charming in its naivete, hardly carries conviction. The adoption of another's son as one's own is not so extra-ordinary an occurence as to justify a sobriquet just on that account. Even less is the justification when the adoption is of a son of one's own brother. If Vattagamani Abhaya had to be given an epithet based on paternity, it was not necessary to seek the reason for it in the fact that he adopted his brother's son as his own, for he had sons of his own, one of whom,

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1. Mahalasekera, G.P: Pali Literature of Ceylon. Chap.2.
2. Nevill, H: Janawansa. English Translation (Taprobanian, I, 1886).

Coranaga, succeeded to the sovereignty[1]. Even without any formal adoption, the son of one's own brother is, according to the Sinhalese system of kinship, modern as well as ancient, entitled to be called 'son'[2]. Vattagamani was Mahaculi's 'father' even without adoption. The explanation of the epithet Piti-raja given in the Mahavamsa appears, therefore, to have been invented, not necessarily by the author of that chronicle, at a time when the real significance of the word had been forgotten. It is also not impossible that the explanation is due to a desire, for reasons which would become clear in the sequel, to prevent its real purport gaining currency among the people[3].

If the title 'Piti-raja' was not due to its bearer standing in the relation of 'father' to another person, it is necessary, in order to explain its significance, to ascertain the other meanings that could have been attached to it. The equivalent in Sanskrit of 'Piti-raja' is 'Pitr-raja', and this, we know, is not uncommon in the epics as a name of Yama - a name appropriate to that god for the reason that he is the king of the Pitra i.e. the Manes or the spirits of the departed. In Book I, Canto 48, v. 23 of the Mahabharata, for instance, we read Vyaktam maya 'pi gantavyam Pitr-raja-nivesauan (There is no doubt that I, too, should one day go to the abode of Pitr-raja, i.e. Yama)'. 'Pitr-raja' occurs as the

1. A.I.O.C. (A.R.) 1955. op. cit. p.218.
2. Ibid. p.219.
3. Ibid. p.217.

name of Yama in several other passages of the same epic[1]. If 'Piti-raja' and the old Sinhalese 'Piti-maha-raja' be understood in this sense, the epithet borne by Vattagamani Abhaya, which was preferred by some, in ancient times to his personal name, would indicate that he desired his subjects to take him as Yama, the Divine Judge.

Such a conclusion would also make intelligible an episode in the story of Vattagamani Abhaya, as it is narrated in the Mahavamsa[2]. A few months after his accession to the throne, Vattagamani Abhaya was defeated in battle by invaders from South India, and was forced to flee for life. When the king, with a few followers and those dearest to him, was fleeing before his enemies through the northern gate of Anuradhapura, a Jain ascetic is said to have cried out that the 'Mahakala Sihala' was running away. This phrase 'Mahakala-Sihala' has been translated as 'the great black Sinhalese' and is taken by the translators of the chronicle as well as by writers and students of Ceylonese history as a personal insult which the Jain ascetic, meanly taking advantage of the occasion, hurled at the king in his adversity. The epithet can, of course, be interpreted in that sense if the scene were shifted from ancient Anuradhapura to modern times. But in ancient Ceylon, or in India, no one would have been offended by being reminded of his complexion. Some of the great heroes in Indian literature are described as dark,

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1. Mbh. II, 8, 30 and III, 181, 14.
2. Mahavamsa, Chap. XXX, vv. 35-36.

for instance Rama and Krishna. Draupadi, the heroine of the Mahabharata and Damayanti, immortalised in one of the most beautiful poems in Sanskrit, were dark of complexion. This did not make them the less desirable. Even today, Sinhalese villagers who have not been "educated" to entertain newer values will not feel ashamed by such names as Kalu Banda, Kalu Manika or Kalu Mahattaya, in which Kalu 'black' is a component part. Moreover, the Jain ascetic could not have damaged the king's reputation by referring to his body's complexion for which he was not responsible. The ascetic, if he wanted to pay back for any real or imagined injury, might have made use of words impeaching the king's character or conduct.

The expression put in the mouth of the Jain ascetic gains significance if Vattagamani Abhaya had set himself up as Yama on earth. '_Kala_' is one of the best known of the names of Yama[1] and "_maha_" can be added, according to one's choice, to the name of any important personage, human or divine. 'Mahakala' would thus be synonymous with 'Piti-raja' or 'Pitimaharaja'. The spectacle of a king who had to flee before his earthly enemies only a few months after he had proclaimed himself to be Yama would have indeed aroused any one's sense of irony. If the Jain ascetic did not subscribe to these political doctrines which ascribed such divinity to kings, as was very likely, there was no better propaganda than to bring the irony of this situation forcibly home to the

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1. Sometimes this term is also applied to Shiva and to Lord Krishna.

people by shouting that the Mahakala (Yama) of the Sinhalese was taking to his heels.

Yama is generally conceived as a god of fearful aspect, and a king who identified himself with Yama must have cultivated this bearing. There appear to have been current, in ancient Ceylon, folk-tales in which Vattagamani Abhaya figured in such a capacity. For Buddha-ghosa, in the Samantapasadika, refers to an incident in which the gnashing of teeth by Vattagamani Abhaya was sufficient to cause the death of an unfortunate individual named Culasumana[1]. If the significance of Vattagamani's title Piti-raja is as given above, it will enable us to understand, in their proper perspective, the events of his reign, as given in the Mahavamsa and the commentaries[2].

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1. Ibid. p.45.
2. Mahavamsa, Chap. XXXIII, No.34-104 and Vamsatthappakasini, pp.612-623. Dutthagamani Abhaya (161-137 B.C.) who re-established the first dynasty of Sinhalese kings after an interval of Tamil domination so guided his policy that the interests of the royal house became identical with those of the Buddhist sangha. The king extended his liberal patronage to the sangha and the bhikkhus exerted their great influence with the people in order to make the latter faithful to the royal house. This happy union between the state and the church continued with little interruption up to the accession of Vattagamani. The majority of the people had accepted the Buddhist creed, and they would have been gratified by the religious policy of Dutthagamani and his successors. But there were Jains as well as Brahmins, who would naturally have been antagonised by the royal family identifying itself so closely with the interest of the sangha. They, however, had no chance to express their dissatisfaction by hostility towards the royal family, for the latter had popular support so long as the sangha was on the side of the king. If Vattagamani, as we have inferred, proclaimed himself to be Yama, acting on political doctrines not consistent with the tenets of the Theravada, while remaining an adherent of the Buddhist creed, he would certainly have offended the Sinhalese sangha which, up to that time, was not

If Vattagamani Abhaya, as we have suggested, identified himself with Yama, he must have done so because

divided into sects, and was not prepared to endorse any doctrines opposed to those preached by Mahinda. The displeasure of the sangha would have resulted in the unpopularity of the king, and those sections of the population which had already been antagonised by the pro-Buddhist policies of the royal family would have found an opportunity of translating their discontent into action. And this was precisely what happened. A Brahmin named Tiya, (for an account of Tiya's revolt, see Sammoha-vinodani. Translated by Codrington. p.448) who was hostile towards Buddhism, raised the standard of revolt; and the invasion by South Indian hordes, which drove the king into hiding, was probably not unconnected with domestic discontent.

Vattagamani, in hiding, was gathering forces to regain his throne. In the meantime, those who had wrested power from him did not extend patronage to the sangha, some members of which must have realised that, in spite of his heretical theories in politics, Vattagamani in power would be more adventageous to the Buddhist Church than the rulers of South Indian Origin. Thus we find that an influential monk helped Vattagamani during his years of misfortune. An incident relating to this period of the King's eclipse gives us an indication that, even when he was reduced to extreme straits, he was not prepared to forego any fraction of the divinity which he claimed for his person. While still rallying the people to his cause, he had the support of eight powerful chiefs, one of whom he very impoliticially slew for not having prostrated himself on the ground before him. This alienated the other chiefs who deserted the king. At this critical juncture, too, it was that same monk who persuaded the chiefs not be desert Vattagamani Abhaya, by the powerful argument that it was only by supporting him, in spite of his impolitic conduct, that the Buddhist Church could be firmly established.

Vattagamani at last regained his throne, but adversity had not forced him to renounce his claim to be Pitr-raja (Yama). He founded the Abhayagiri Vihara and granted it to that _thera_ (monk) who had helped him in adversity. But the older establishment of the Mahavihara excommunicated this _thera_, thus leading to a schism in the Buddhist Church. If Vattagamani, as we have inferred, claimed to be a god-king (Yama), the establishment of the Abhayagiri Vihara in opposition to the Mahavihara was perhaps dictated by the necessity of having a community of monks who were not opposed to his political doctrines. With the support of the king, the Abhayagiri fraternity increased in numbers. The king's lukewarm attitude to the Mahavihara, in spite of

the worship of that god was prevailing among the people of Ceylon in his time. If we can therefore establish that the cult in fact was known, our hypothesis will receive support therefrom. Yama is frequently mentioned in Singhalese literature, but not as the centre of a cult. Images of Yama have been discovered at ancient sites in Ceylon, sometimes in association with those of other '<u>lokapalas</u>'. The ancient Indian belief that he is the Divine Judge who rewards the virtuous and punishes the evil-doers was made use of by Buddhist preachers for moral ends. Even today, under the name of <u>Yama-rajjuruvo</u> (King Yama), he is known to every Buddhist peasant. He, however, under the familiar name of Yama, does not receive worship as the principal or a subsidiary deity installed in a temple[1].

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the traditions of his family, was very likely due to the reason that the members of the fraternity were uncompromising in their hostility towards the doctrine of the divinity of the king. Those who realised that such an uncompromising hostility towards the only leader who could defend the island against invaders from abroad and anti-Buddhist elements at home, would ultimately undermine the position of the sangha, probably enrolled themselves as members of the Abhayagiri..

1. There is, however, evidence to prove that the deity called Saman in Sinhalese and Sumana in Pali, who is still regarded as one of the four protectors of Ceylon, who figures in the chronicles in connection with the required visits of the Buddha to Ceylon, who is the presiding deity of Mount Samanola (better known as Adam's Peak) and whose shrines at Sabaragamuva and Alutnuvara are visited by thousands of Sinhalese Buddhist votaries on the occasion of the Annual Festival in his honour, is no other than Yama Ceylonised. The transformation of Yama which has taken place in Ceylon, and the traits of Saman which betray his origin form an interesting and fascinating study, the pursuance of which, however, is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Here, we confine ourselves to two links in the chain of evidence which establishes the identification. A Sinhalese Buddhist of the present day will be taken aback if he is told that the mild and good-natured Saman

We may also refer to the title 'Dharma-raja' which figures in Buddhist literature both in India and Ceylon. In the case of Asoka, the title 'Dharma-raja' that he bore has but one significance to a Buddhist. He earned it by his devotion to the Dharma as taught by the Buddha. The character of Asoka and his actions before he embraced Buddhism, which entitled him to an epithet meaning the reverse of dhamma, are often painted in lurid colours, so as to emphasise the transformation made in him by Buddhism (See Mahavamsa, Chap. V,v.189). According to these, Asoka was Dharmraja or Dharmasoka only after he became a Buddhist. If a Buddhist king of Ceylon, which derived its religion through the missionary endeavours of Asoka, is found to have borne a name of Yama, it may not be fantastic to inquire into the possibility that Asoka himself first adopted the title of Dharmraja, not in his character as a patron of Buddhism, but in accordance with the politico-religious beliefs which ascribed divinity to kings[1].

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to whom, by force of habit, he pays courteous respect, is the same as the dreaded Yama, the inevitable interview with whom he rarely contemplates with equanimity. But the Sinhalese Jataka, written in the 14th century, contains conclusive proof that the identity of Saman or Sumana with Yama was well-known at that time. The name Sumana, as it occurs in the Mahavamsa of the 5th century, is based on the Sinhalese name of the god as it was then pronounced. The genuine Sinhalese forms of the name, as it occurs in literary works and is actually pronounced by the average Sinhalese, is Samana, one of the names of Yama. There is a tradition which attributes to Vattagamani Abhaya the discovery of the Buddha's foot-ppint on Mount Samanola (Adam's Peak). The story narrated in the Mahavamsa (I,77 ff) is that the Buddha impressed the foot-print on the summit of this mountain at the requsst of god Sumana, who, as we have seen above, is no other than Yama. If Vattagamani Abhaya identified himself with Yama, the tradition referred to gains significance (See William Skeen, Adam's Peak, Colombo. 1870. p.16.

1. Buddha himself is often referred to as Dharmaraja; but,

Now, if Asoka used the title Dharmaraja with such a significance as explained above, he had ancient traditions to support him. In every age and clime, it was customary for kings to model themselves on the heroes of antiquity; this was particularly so in India. And, in adopting the title 'Dharmaraja', Asoka seems to have followed Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, the heroes of the Mahabhsrata[1]. 'Dharmaraja' is one of the commonest epithets by which Yudhisthira is referred to in the epic. He was considered the embodiment of Dharma, i.e. Yama. That deity was believed to have been the actual father of Yudhisthira and, in conformity with this belief, the hero is represented in the

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in the early period of Buddhism, no lay adherent would have assumed a title which was considered appropriate to the Buddha. One can rule out the possibility that Asoka was called Dharmaraja in order to identity him with the Buddha. If Asoka was Dharmaraja even before he embraced Buddhism, the Buddhists could continue to use that epithet in referring to him. If Asoka's title of Dharmaraja denoted divine kingship, it follows that he was regarded as the counterpart of Yama on earth. In India and Indonesia, when a king identified himself with a god, it was indicated by a visible symbol of that god, a model of the divine abode, Mahameru or Kailasa, for instance. Yama, in popular belief, was regarded as the deity superintending the punishment of evil-doers in Hell; and, if a king wished to be taken as the counterpart of that deity on Earth, it can best be driven home to his subjects by the exhibition of a miniature model of Hell. And we are told by Hiuen Tsang that Asoka, before he embraced Buddhism, did in fact possess a very realistic representation of that place of punishment and torture. See Watters: on Yuan Chwang's Travels in India. Chap. XII. Also refer to Samuel Beal: Buddhist Records of the Western World. Vol.II. p.86.

1. This epic may not have existed in its present form in the time of Asoka; but it is not impossible that the kernel of the epic is as old as, or older than 3rd century B.C. At any rate, the story of the Pandavas and Kauravas must have been current in India in Asoka's age or even earlier.

epic as always upholding Dharma in actions. The kings assembled for the Rajasuya sacrifice proclaim that it was Yudhisthira's championing of Dharma which makes them acknowledge him as their suzerain[1]. Like Yama, Yudhisthira was believed to possess the faculty of slaying by sight. After the valiant Bhisma was slain, Krishna in congragulating Yudhisthira, says: "Having encountered thee, slayer with the eye, he was burnt with your fear-some eye"[2].

There is evidence to suggest that a king of Ceylon proclaimed himself to be a god who is the symbol of Wealth (Artha) and, in the foregoing paragraphs, we have collected evidence for the view that kings (in Ceylon as well as India) were sometimes taken as the embodiment of Justice (Dharma). In the Mahabharata, there are certain passages from which the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas - the main theme of the epic - can be interpreted as a conflict between the two principles of Dharma and Artha. By common consent, the Pandavas stood for Dharma, the general impression to be gathered from the epic is that the Kauravas, the opponents of the Pandavas, stood for the negation of Dharma and not a defensible principle of statecraft like Artha. But we must remember that the epic, at least as it is now, takes the side of the Pandavas. There are, however, passages of the epic in which the connection of Artha with the Kauravas is referred to in a manner not deprecatory. In a council of war, Karna refers to Duryodhana, the leader of the Kauravas, as the

1. Mbh. II,34,12 ff.
2. Mbh. VI,115.

Arthapati, saying that other people do not comprehend affairs so well as one to whom that title is applicable[1]. 'Arthapati' may be rendered as 'Lord of Wealth' and it is interesting to note that the title 'Vat-himi', by which kings are referred to in Sinhalese inscriptions of the 9th and 10th centuries, can be interpreted to give the same meaning[2].

The Nandas, who preceded the Mauryas in the sovereignty of Magadha, also appear to have laid emphasis on the Artha aspect of statecraft. The commentary of the Mahavamsa contains an elaborate account of a hoard of gold deposited in the Ganges by the founder of the dynasty. This is paralleled by the statement in the later chronicle that Kasyapa, having built a palace on the summit of Sigiri rock, made deposits of wealth thereon[3]. The purpose in both cases seems to be the imitation of Kuvera, who is fabled to possess nine inexhaustible hoards (nidhi) of wealth[4]. The names of some of the members of the Nanda dynasty are suggestive. One was Dhana Nanda, another bore the name of one of Kuvera's treasure hoards-Mahapadma.

Under the rule of the Nandas, the power of Magadha greatly expanded, for it is to avoid a conflict with the forces of the Nandas that the cohorts of Alexander the Macedonian refused to advance beyond the land of the Five Rivers. It is, therefore, easy to imagine

1. Mbh. II 5,3. (Trans. P.C.Roy).
2. J.R.A.S.,C.B. Centenary Volume, p.159f.
3. Culavamsa, edited by Geiger, Chap. 39, v.4.
4. Nav (Nine) Nidhi. Nine pearls.

that, in order to build up such a power the Nandas paid more attention to material than to spiritual affairs, thus incurring the displeasure of Brahmanas as well as the Buddhists, who stood for Dharma. The accounts which represent the Nandas as embodiments of rapacity and greed should, therefore, be treated with reserve, very much like the caricatures of modern politicals drawn by their opponents. The same applies to the delineation of the character of the Kauravas in the Mahabharata and of Kasyapa in the Culavamsa. The manifestations of certain politico-religious conceptions have been parodied by those who regarded Dharma as the essential of statecraft to the disadvantage of those who emphasised Artha[1].

These two concepts of Artha and Dharma are in fact the two pillars on which the edifice of the state may be said to have been raised in ancient India and Ceylon. It is a common place in the Sinhalese Jataka to state that the councillors advised the king on affairs of Artha and

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1. But political theorists gave Artha its due place in the scheme of things; and, in the doctrine of the divinity of the king, Artha had its place by the side of Dharma. The Rajadharma of the Mahabharata, after giving an account of the primeval ruler, raises the pertinent question why the king, who does not excel other men in his physical and mental faculties, is entitled to implicit obedience from them. The question is then answered from the mythological standpoint: "And that time, a golden lotus arose from the forehead of Visnu, wherein was born Goddess Sri, the consort of wise Dharma. Of Sri, by (union with) Dharma, O Pandava, was born Artha. Therefore, in kingship are established Dharma as well as Artha and Sri." Incidentally, this passage from the Mahabharata explains why the Sinhalese kings in their charters, from the 15th century up to the downfall of the monarchy in 1815, affix the syllable "Sri" as the sign-manual.

Dharma[1]. In modern political parlance, Artha may be translated as 'Welfare'. Everything that pertains to the material welfare of human beings, finance, trade, agriculture, etc. can be included under this head. Under Dharma is included Justice, Law, Religion - in short everything necessary for the spiritual well-being of a community. In a well-organised state, the one is as necessary as the other. Injury to the one results injury to the other, too. Sometimes, it is difficult to determine whether a particular matter has to be included in the one or the other. For example, providing for the sick and the comfort of travellers, which Asoka busied himself with, may come under Dharma as well as Artha.

There would, however, have been occasions on which one of these aspects was comparatively neglected so that men's attention was drawn to its necessity. A ruler who directs his policy towards one of these aspects which had been neglected would naturally receive the support of his subjects. But too much emphasis on one aspect would make a ruler unpopular. Dharma, however admirable in theory, if exclusively pursued, would result not in any benefit to the community as a whole, but to those who claim the monopoly of its interpretation. Artha, if pursued to the exclusion of Dharma would lead to consequencew even more deplorable. After Asoka had espoused Dharma, it was rarely that a king had the courage to make a stand for Artha. The bad colour which Artha

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1. While, to the early Buddhists politics constituted Dharma alone, later Buddhist writers were forced to concede a place to Artha as well. Refer to Gokhale: Indian Thought through the ages. pp.54, 64.

acquired in course of time is symbolised by the iconographical development of Kuvera who, having been quite a presentable deity in the early centuries of the present era, became deformed of body in medieval times[1]. It is the tragedy of history that the rulers of the world have rarely succeeded in maintaining an even balance between Artha and Dharma. The democratic socialist experiment which is being tried today in both India and Ceylon within the framework of indigenous traditions (Witness the Asoka pillar as the State emblem in India and the emphasis on Buddhism as state religion in Ceylon) may succeed in doing it. Who knows ?

§ 3

THE CHARACTER OF CEYLON'S NATIONALISM

The political bonds between India and Ceylon, as we noted earlier, had been weakened during the 16th century. In spite of continuous cultural contacts, during the preceding century in many ways, Ceylon was evolving its own distinct personality[2]. With the establishment of the British rule both in Ceylon and in India, and under the compulsive effect of the demographic laws governing the strategy of the British Empire in South East Asia, Ceylon and India once again began to come closer. Once again, Indian political tradition very much entered the political stage in Ceylon[3]. In order to appreciate the

1. A.I.O.C. (A.R.) Vol. II. 1955. p.248.
2. Mendis,G.C: Ceylon Today and Yesterday. Chapter 3.
3. Sarkar, N.K: The Demography of Ceylon. pp. 47-48.

impact of the Indian National Movement on the struggle for independence in Ceylon, it is necessary to keep in mind some of the important aspects and characteristics of Ceylonese nationalism. These characteristics were in their turn, developed as a response to the British colonial policy.

The British colonial policy in Ceylon did not materially differ from that in any other country of Asia and the Ceylonese response to it was, more or less, the same as elsewhere. They exploited the Island's natural wealth, kept the economy rural and feudal, fomented and encouraged social, economic and political schism between the Indians and Ceylonese people. "They (the British colonizers)", Sir John Kotelawala writes in his Memoirs "thought our country belonged to them, and was theirs alone to exploit, while the richer natives should be kept in their place and enjoy none of the privileges exclusively reserved for the ruling race. Social status, sportsmanship, university education, any physical prowess counted for nothing if you were a son of the soil. The fact that your family prospered was merely due to the tolerance of a kindly government whose main job it was to civilize the natives and make use of them as collies or clerks... Colonialism seemed to infect them (the British officials, planters and merchants) with a tropical disease, of which the most familiar symptom was an ill-concealed contempt for brown, black and yellow men as such. The ancient civilization of Ceylon meant nothing to them unless they were scholars interested in history. The laws of the land

had to be framed primarily for the benefit of British interests. Good roads, hospitals, and schools were a necessity only in the estate areas, and were apparently a luxury to which villagers and peasant were not entitled. First class railway carriages were not meant for third-class natives even if they were Kandyan chiefs or Tamil knights"[1].

Thus, social discrimination, economic exploitation, and political disintegration, were the worst features of the British colonial policy. But colonial policy is never static. It has been constantly evolving. In the first stage (17th century) it was rather a projection of concepts current in the domestic policy of the metropolitan powers[2]. In the second stage (18th and 19th centuries) it had to re-adjust itself, in increasing measure, to conditions created by the changing economic and social standards among the colonial peoples[3]. In the third stage - roughly since 1919 and more particularly after 1945 - it became imperative to reassess colonial policy in the light of the socialist challenge and the concern shown by international opinion in colonial affairs[4]. In this sense, therefore, the British imperialists had to develop the resources and stabilize the political conditions of the areas under their control, and in this process they also unleashed the process of decolonization[5]. Through English education, they created

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1. An Asian Prime Minister's Story. pp.20-21.
2. Rose: Politics In Southern Asia. Chap.1.
3. Holland, Ed. Asian Nationalism And the West·Introduction.
4. Ibid.
5. Journal of International Affairs. Columbia. Vol.X,1956. No.I. Editor's Forward.

the climate of revolt and even through conversions, they roused a degree of political consciousness. Through independent judiciary they captured the imagination of the natives and they laid the foundations of rule of law and, therefore, for the demand of freedom and self-rule. The creation of a highly centralised and efficient administration, an army high command, and rapid means of transport and communications, were instruments of social and economic advance, even if they were really tools of colonialism. The maximum initiative and responsibility rested with the colonial administration in Ceylon or in India, and the source of law was the local legislature and not the Imperial Parliament. It was in comparatively rare cases that legislation took the form of Order-in-Council. This procedure, without doubt, assisted the progress of self-government, more particularly in view of the growing participation by 'natives' in the membership of the Legislative and Executive Councils.

As in Britain, the political evolution in the colonies went from Executive Absolutism to Legislative Supremacy, based on the progressive widening of franchise, growth of civil liberties and a healthy press, increasing restrictions on the Executive Power, broadening the bases of the civil service, which gradually began to be recruited from numerous sections of society, and the growth of local government units[1]. In all these respects, the British

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1. Woodward, W.H: Expansion of the British Empire. Chap.XIII.

colonial policy was more liberal than the Portuguese or the Dutch colonial policies. There was the intention to grant some measure of self-government, although this was done in painfully slow stages. The people in Ceylon as in India were free to criticize the Government, and public opinion could thus be created on important issues and 'constant agitation for political reforms could become an irresistible clamour'[1]. If, on the one hand, Ceylonese nationalism has been largely the product of English education, and the unifying influence of British rule, on the other, it received a tremendous stimulus from the Indian nationalist movement[2] and the forces released by the First World War. Referring to the latter, Jennings writes: "It is not an exaggeration to say that the Ceylonese as a people were invented in the present century. The War of 1914-18 provided a great stimulus towards nationalism. The wartime propaganda, unofficial as well as official, which asserted that Britain was fighting for the freedom of small nations, the right of self-determination, the prevention of imperialist aggression, and so forth, became for the nationalists propaganda for the freedom of Ceylon. Everything said about 'brave little Belgium' could be adapted to 'brave little Ceylon' the essential difference being that brave little Belgium had been invaded in 1914 and brave little Ceylon in 1505. When President Roosevelt included among his Fourteen Points the right of every nation to

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1. Ibid. pp. 49 ff.
2. Holland, op. cit. pp. 51 ff.

govern itself freely, he enunciated a doctrine which the educated Ceylonese could hardly fail to apply to themselves"[1].

§ 4.

IMPACT OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

On this showing, it becomes quite obvious that Ceylonese nationalism had been immensely influenced by Western education and that its ideology was not fundamentally different from that of 19th century Europe[2]. It lacked a Garibaldi, a Palmerston or even a Parnell. Nor was there a Gandhi or Nehru. The Tamil brothers, Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Sir Ponnamambalam Ramanathan, were only comparatively eminent, and they broke away from the Congress in 1921. Neither Sir James Peiris nor Sir Baron Jayatilaka had much of a popular appeal[3]. The Ceylon National Congress could never be so broad-based as the Indian National Congress was; it never had that inspiration which had been given to the Indian National Congress by Gandhi; and it could never succeed in arousing the enthusiasm of the common people. Possibly the consequences were beneficial, for Ceylonese nationalism never went to extremes. In the ferment of Asia from 1900 onwards, Ceylon has been singularly peaceful[4].

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1. Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon. Chap.3.
2. Jennings: The Commonwealth In Asia. Chap. VI.
3. Holland,W.L (Ed): Asian Nationalism And The West. pp.28-29.
4. Ibid. Chap. 4.

There were many other reasons too which enabled the Ceylonese to avoid extremism, which is such a prominent characteristic of the national movements of some other Afro-Asian countries. In the first place, economic conditions of the Island have been far better than in other countries. This may be due to the fact that, by and large, cash crops were introduced in Ceylon which fetched easy money for the growers, some of which they spent in the Island itself. Ceylon actually never had to face the problem of industrialization. These aspects we examine in detail in the next chapter. Secondly, the moderateness of Ceylonese nationalism may also be attributed to an equable climate. This we have already examined in the first chapter. Thirdly, it may be said to be a consequence of tradition, which the tolerance of Buddhism and Hinduism have helped to maintain[1]. The riots of 1915, which would long ago, have been forgotten in India as a very trumpery affair stand out in Ceylon's history as the only example of civil strife since the Kandyan rebelions[2]. These riots intensified the demand for constitutional reforms and in 1919 the nationalists organizations were fused into the Ceylon National Congress. This body, unlike its Indian prototype, used only constitutional methods to attain its objective[3]. Now this may be due to the general social effects of Buddhism and Hinduism, particularly the former, its doctrines of peace,

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1. Patterson: The Far East. A Social Geography. pp.170-171.
2. Jennings: The Approach To Self-Government. p.35.
3. Encyclopedia Brittanica. Vol.5. 1953. pp.180-181.

kindliness, learning and generosity have undoubtedly done much to soften the naturally violent Ceylonese nature, (like the Burmese, they have a very high murder rate). Ceylon has also her share of left wing youths, divided among the usual somewhat romantically named revolutionary groups (Trotskyists, Leninists, etc.), but not having been occupied by the Japanese she has not suffered from any violent revolution. In 1945, therefore, she was poised to have a better chance than most South-East Asian countries of proceeding with the necessary reforms and developments without such a reactionary disaster[1]. Finally, it may be mentioned that the Westernized elite in Ceylon was very Westernized, atleast in a number of important and visible characteristics. In 1947, English was the written and spoken language of the whole of the middle class, though most could also speak either Sinhalese or Tamil. The earlier English schools had been founded in 1822 and there had been a rapid increase in English education since 1900[2]. It must be borne in mind that these schools were English not only in language, but also in organisation and curriculum. This was very much unlike the situation in India. The London and Cambridge Examinations dominated the teaching until 1943. Until very recently, the University of Ceylon was affiliated to the London University and its organisation even today is much like that of the modern English Universities. Until 1956, the educational standards were

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1. For a detailed analysis of this refer to M.G.Gupta: International Relations Since 1919. Part III. Chap.18.
2. Detailed treatment is found in Sessional Paper XVII. 1962. Colombo, 1961.

definitely higher in Ceylon than in India; and in 1947 the standard of literacy was very much higher ~~xxxx~~ in Ceylon[1], (being about 60 per cent while in India it was 12½%). This was, of course, partly a reflection of the higher standard of living due mainly to heavy investment in tea, rubber, and coconut, the Island's main products.

The westernization in Ceylon to a very high degree was reflected not only in the sphere of education, but also in other spheres. The contrast between trouser and 'sarong' was, on the whole, much stronger than that between trouser and 'dhoti'. The tastes of the educated people had acquired foreign hue and complexion. Even the forms of greetings had ceased to be national. The cultural decadance had been much more chaotic in Ceylon than in India[2].

All these factors had been responsible for lending some special characteristics to Ceylon's nationalism. These may now be noted. In the first place, nationalism in the Island was super-imposed upon racialism. As Jennings has put it:

> " The Sinhalese and the minorities lived in the same country, which as an Island was clearly a geographical unit and was, therefore, thought to be a political unit. Though it has been alleged - for instance before the Soulbury Commission - that the Sinhalese leaders were aiming at 'Sinhalese domination' and though there has been a genuine attempt by some of the leaders notably Mr. Senanayake, to ignore racial divisions, the existence of the Sinhala Maha Sabha, a communal organisation headed by a Cabinet Minister, shows that even among the Sinhalese, who can afford to be generous since

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1. Ibid.
2. Akzin, Benjamin: State and Nations. p.34.

> they possess a majority, racial communalism plays an important part, while among the minorities policies have been thought of primarily in communal terms. Nationalism would have been stronger had it been more nearly unanimous" (1).

To this it may also be added that the very gentleness and ease of the transition to independence had rendered Ceylonese nationalism a little loose. Had the Ceylonese been forced to fight the British more vigorously, it is conceivable that they would have closed their ranks, atleast where the gap between the urban elite and the villager was concerned, though it is doubtful whether communal harmony would have resulted. The situation in Ceylon has, more or less been similar to that in Pakistan, where the Muslim League rulers got their independence without having to fight for it [2].

Secondly, the Ceylonese reaction to colour prejudice often practised by the British rulers, was quite sharp. This was inspite of the fact that the Sinhalese and the Tamils operated the worst type of illogical and unscientific social distinctions, more or less of the same type as was practised in India. Colour prejudice created a common bond among the educated Ceylonese, a reaction to British imperialism and an anxiety to get the foreigners out of the country [3]. The researches in the ancient traditions of Ceylon and the knowledge of a high level of attainment in the ancient past of Ceylon, as revealed by

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1. Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon. Chap.3.
2. For an interesting analysis of this point refer to Karanjia, R.K: The Mind of Mr. Nehru. Chap.IX.
3. Jennings. op. cit. Chap. 3.

the excavations at Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa lent to the Ceylonese nationalism a measure of pride. On the one hand, the historical researches led to a degree of national consciousness; on the other, and more impertantly, it also led to communalism[1]. Historical research indicated that it was the Tamils who turned the Sinhalese out of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa[2]. History thus supported not nationalism but communalism[3]. Moreover, neither the Sinhalese nor the Tamil language has been used in any substantial measure to express modern learning, nor would either be capable of use for this purpose without a great deal of development. As we stated earlier, the medium of education beyond the elementary stage has been English and even for elementary education, English was found to be much more useful just because all the paraphernalia of teaching is readily available in that language. The best teachers in 1947 and even today - one might even say that the only good teachers - are those who use English and cannot teach either in Sinhalese or Tamil[4]. If there would be only one language in Ceylon with valid claim to become national language, there would have been no difficulty in meeting it, and whatever the result, English might have been displaced. Unfortunately, there is not one national language, but two national languages - the Sinhalese and the Tamils[5]. The national language question,

1. Ceylon Today and Yesterday. Chap.11.
2. Parker H: Ancient Ceylon. pp.51-55.
3. Pieris,R: Ceylon and the Patriots. p.46.
4. Jennings. op. cit. Chap.5.
5. Pakeman: Ceylon. p.46.

therefore, does not unify the nation; the national languages, as in India, divide the nation[1]. What is more, they divide it by separating the people into language groups, which in Ceylon, are also racial groups[2]. This fact is often glossed over (as by the enthusiasts of Hindi in India) by the use of the phrase "the mother-tongues". In India, you have only to ask the question, what is the mother-tongue and you will immediately see that for U.P. it is Hindi, for the Punjab, it is Punjabi and so on. In Ceylon, when the Special Committee on Education was taking evidence in 1941-42, the first item in its questionaire was "Are you in favour of education through the mother tongue ?"[3]. The answer was invariably in the affirmative, but when the obvious second question was put: "What is the mother tongue?", the difficulty was obvious. Eventually, the Committee achieved a definition, which reflected the racial implication - the mother tongue of the Sinhalese is Sinhalese and the mother tongue of a Tamil is Tamil[4]. Thus, while nationalism has necessarily sought to raise the prestige of what are called, significantly enough, the national languages, in the context of two languages of Ceylon, the nationalists are found working against heavy

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1. Stephens, Ian: Pakistan, old Country New Nation. p.60. Mr. Stephens writes: "Little Ceylon, too, has witnessed dreadful scenes, as a result of clash of interests between the Sinhalese speaking and the Tamils. The barbarities during the riots of 1958, not only in rural parts hard of access near Polonnaruwa and the Batticaloa coast but in the streets of Colombo seemed at first incredible, to people used to the island's normally easy-going, friendly ways, and the Tamil's bitter prolonged satyagraha campaign early in 1961 did not lack ugly incidents either".
2. Ibid. p.49.
3. Sessional Paper. III. 1942. Colombo.
4. Holland. op. cit. p.31.

odds[1]. As in India, they tried to evolve a formula by which Sinhalese or Tamil could be declared as the first language, and English the second language. After 1956, the language question assumed alarming proportions[2].

Again, an important aspect of Ceylonese nationalism has been an emphasis on religious revival. Christianity has been an aggressive religion. The Portuguese sought to force Christianity on the people and in 1947 the Roman Catholics were the largest single group inspite of the Dutch attempt to suppress them. During the British rule, the missionaries of all sects were allowed to propagate their faith. The nationalist movement from 1900 onwards harnessed religion to their chariot; Hinduism and Buddhism became aggressive not so much through the priests, as through the politicians[3]. To quote Sir Ivor Jennings: "Among the Sinhalese, indeed, conversion to Buddhism is sometimes a sign of an awakening interest in political questions. The division among the Hindus and the Buddhists did not, however, cause any communal tension, for they are both tolerant religions, and the nationalist is intolerant, if at all, only in relation to Christianity, which is an importation from the West and, therefore, objectionable"[4].

As a result of the forces and factors we have mentioned above, one will be struck by the remarkably brief

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1. Ibid. p.32.
2. Mendis. op. cit. Chap. 13. Also see Stephens, Ian. op. cit. p.64.
3. Ibid. p.21, 26.
4. Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon. Chap.3.

span of the independence movement in Ceylon, as compared to similar movements in other colonial countries. One of the most distinguishing features of the movement here was the absence of any serious mass struggle conducted in a sustained manner over a long period of time[1]. Under these circumstances it was only natural that the leadership of Ceylon which took over power from the British neither faced a sizeable parliamentary opposition to its policies nor had to contend with issues of deep emotional significance to the masses. This leadership, consisting primarily of the upper strata of Ceylonese society with considerable landed property, was emotionally as well as intellectually oriented towards the west[2]. The leaders were active in public life, participated in almost all the legislative bodies[3] providing a loose opposition to the official majority in the twenties and playing a prominent role in the State Council later[4]. Consequently, on the eve of the transfer of power, when Ceylon went to polls in 1947, to elect its own representatives, this western-oriented group, with its fairly wide political experience, was bound to assume the

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1. Ivor Jennings. "Crown and Commonwealth in Asia". International Affairs (London), 32. April 1956. p.137.
2. A.J.Wilson. "Ceylonese Cabinet Ministers 1947-59: Their Political Economic and Social Background", Ceylon Economist (Colombo), 5. March 1960. pp.8-11.
3. Ibid., pp.3-7.
4. To quote a few instances, D.S.Senanayake was the Minister of Agriculture and Lands from 1931-47 as well as the Leader of the State Council and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Ministers since 1942. Sir John Kotelawala was the Minister of Communication and Works from 1936-37. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike was the Minister of Local Administration from 1936-47. For details see ibid. pp.3-7, 14-15, 22, 25.

leadership of a national party which could inherit power from the British. The United National Party, as it was called, was not so much a party as it was a conglomeration of several groups [1]. As in some of the other Asian countries, it claimed the allegiance of the masses without necessarily being a mass party. The opposition to the UNP, consisting of small and weak parties, was in no position to challenge its supremacy [2]. It was, of course, different in India. With the appearance of Mahatma Gandhi on India's political horizons, the Congress party had become a mass movement [3]. After 1936 it had been transformed into a great National party. Gandhi had given the Congress a broad national base by successfully fusing religious notions and political

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1. Apart from several members of the Ceylon National Congress (formed in 1919 on the model of the Indian National Congress) two groups joined the UNP. They were the Ceylon Muslim League and the Sinhala Maha Sabha. Like the Burmese AFPFL, the Sinhala Maha Sabha was not officially dissolved. Thus till 1951 it effectively functioned as a party within party. W.Howard Wriggins, Ceylon: Dilemmas of New Nation (Princeton, 1960), pp.7-9.
2. In the first election held under the new constitution in 1947, the United National Party secured 42 out of 95 seats in the House. The six appointed members and a significant proportion of the 21 Independent members voted regularly with it. Out of 7 members of Tamil Congress, 5 eventually joined the government party. The Trotskyist parties - the Lanka Sama Samaj Party and the smaller Bolshevik Lennist Party - together gained 15 seats. The Communist Party won 3 seats and the Ceylon Indian Congress 6. In the 1952 elections, the UNP emerged even stronger with 54 seats and the opposition was again divided between Trotskyits, Communists, Sinhalese communal party, two Tamil parties and two insignificant 'splinter' parties. Ibid., p.105.
3. Weiner, Myron: Party Politics In India. Princeton. 1957. Chapter I.

objectives and rallying the villagers behind him[1]. While before 1920, the urban, professional intelligentsia, which dominated the Indian National Congress had little contact with the masses of the country, after that date, the Congress brought together a wide assortment of groups from business, labour and the peasantry[2]. Only communal considerations were able substantially to divide the national movement, with the Muslims, Sikhs, Anglo-Indians, and Parsis, maintaining their own organisation to act on behalf of their communities. And yet, some of the important leaders of all these communities were ardent members of the Congress. None of the big leaders of the Congress party had entered the Ministry or the Legislature. The Congress High Command used to select lesser persons to contest elections and accept the Ministerial jobs[3]. This was clearly different from what had happened in Ceylon.

The most important departure from the Indian political tradition was in respect of Ceylonese leaders' attitude towards constitutional reforms. For many years, the Indian politicians, basing their opinion on what they thought to be the experience of the United States of America, and actively aided by the theory and practice of communism believed that such government could be obtained only by force or (what proved to be in practice very much the same

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1. Ibid. p.14.
2. Namboodiripad, E.M.S: The Mahatma and the Ism. Chap.3.
3. Ibid. pp.40-41.

thing) by non-violent, non-cooperation or Satyagraha. In Ceylon, however, the opposite view was taken[1]. Her leaders thought that they would take their country closer to freedom by honestly working out the constitutional reforms. If Sir Ivor Jennings is to be believed, most of the leaders of Ceylon actually felt that the complications of the Indian problem "and the behaviour of the Indian politicians were actually retarding developments in Ceylon"[2]. Elaborating his point of view, he writes:

> " It is believed that the scheme which Mr. D.S. Senanayake put before the British Cabinet in 1945 would have been accepted but for the fact that proposals for India were simultaneously under consideration. Because of the conflict between the Indian Congress and the Muslim League, the Ceylon scheme could not be applied to India, and it was evidently thought undesirable to complicate the Indian problem by solving the easier problem of Ceylon. The result was the postponment of Ceylon's independence by two years, the scheme accepted in 1947 being necessarily less favourable to the United Kingdom than Ceylon had been willing to accept in 1945"(3).

The process of non-violence, non-cooperation, as it functioned in India, was closely watched and studied in Ceylon, with a view to finding out whether it could be tried in the Island[4]. The political leaders here were equally anxious for self-government. In general, it was felt by the leaders in Ceylon that the Indian strategy would not help the cause of independence[5]. In this, the events in fact

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1. Bailey, Sadney: Ceylon. Hutchinson Series. Chap.3.
2. The Approach to Self-Government. p.26.
3. Ibid. p.27.
4. Bailey. op. cit. pp.36-40.
5. Gensburg,N (Ed): The Pattern,of Asia. Chap.XXVIII.

proved them to be in the wrong. Nothing demoralised in fact the British Government in India so much as the mass arrests courted by the Indians on different occasions. The differences between Indian and Ceylon nationalists on the question of selecting a proper strategy can be understood if we bear in mind the entire background of the Congress movement and that of the National movement in Ceylon[1]. In the case of the latter, the masses had not been dragged into the front line of the struggle for independence. In fact when freedom came to Ceylon in 1948, for the common men but for the buntings and festivities, nothing very much unusual or uncommon seemed to have happened[2]. During the thirtees, some leaders of Ceylon thought of trying the weapon of Satyagraha[3]. There was some hesitation before 1942, but after D.S.Senanayake became leader of the State Council in that year, the strategy was carefully thought out and put into operation with great tact and skill[4]. The constitution of 1947 was difficult to operate; if nevertheless it functioned efficiently that very difficulty would be a strong argument for going further as soon as possible. In the process, too, it was easy gradually to encroach upon the sphere of action reserved to His Majesty's Government; the heterogeneous Board of Ministers, with limited powers, could be made to function more like a Cabinet. Conditions were particularly favourable because of the war with Japan[5].

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1. See Holland: Asian Nationalism and the West. pp.347 ff.
2. Rose: op. cit. Chap.4.
3. Elliot,C.W.B: The Real Ceylon. Chap.2.
4. Holland. op. cit. pp.28 ff.
5. Jeffries: The Path to Independence. Chap.3.

Defence was a matter for the Government of the United Kingdom; but in wartime it is impossible to separate defence from other aspects of civil administration - such as the management of the railways and broadcasting, the acquisition and use of land, public works of all kinds, finance, and so forth. In fact, the armed forces had either to work with the civil administration or take it over[1]. The Commander-in-Chief had the necessary powers to assume responsibility for civil administration, but he could not justify the exercise of these powers so long as he received collaboration from the Ministers. In giving such collaboration, the Ministers emphasised that its continuance was contingent upon steps being taken to meet the demand for a greater degree of self-government, and their strongest supporter was the Commander-in-Chief himself, who soon discovered that he could get what he wanted by direct approach to the Ministers, but that the machine worked with great friction if he tried to use either his own compulsory powers or those of the Governor[2].

When an offer of an increased measure of self-government, less than the Ministers desired, was made in 1945, Mr. Senanayake again decided "to break with the Indian tradition"[3]. He decided to give the offer the most favourable interpretation possible, to accept it in accordance with that interpretation, and then to press for more. The offer was fairly detailed, but when it was

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1. Hulugalle, H.A.J: British Governors of Ceylon. p.149.
2. Jennings: The Approach to Self-Government. pp.197-98.
3. Ibid. p.198.

examined it was seen that on many matters of great political importance, it was possible to hold two views, one giving more powers and one giving less. Sir Ivor Jennings was instructed so to interpret it that the utmost powers were obtained "to squeeze the lemon to the last drop". Indeed, it seemed to him that the decision of the Board of Ministers "squeezed out some drops that were not in the lemon"[1]. Again in 1945, Mr. Senanayake accepted less than complete independence, secured approval from the State Council, and won a majority in the Parliament established under the Constitution of 1946[2]. When in 1947 he renewed his application for full self-government he had every reason to believe that the application would be granted, as it was. The interval between the Donoughmore Commission of 1928, which recommended the first transitional Constitution, and the attainment of independence was thus nearly twenty years, or virtually the same period as the interval between the Simon Commission and the Indian Independence Act but "whereas the greater part of the period was one of conflict in India, the Ceylonese Ministers were able to do much for the development of their country"[3].

All this, of course, does not mean that the Indian National Movement, in its multifarous form did not influence the national movement in Ceylon, or that the Indian struggle

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1. Ibid. p.198.
2. Jeffries. op. cit. p.63.
3. Jennings. op. cit. p.199.

for freedom did not accelerate the pace of freedom in the Island[1]. Anybody, who studies closely the effects of the visits of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru and of various other Indian leaders to Ceylon, would see without much difficulty the profound impact which India's struggle for independence had on Ceylon. One of the major characteristics of the Indian National Movement has been the international perspective in which it had been put at a very early date. As early as 1920, the Congress paid homage to the memory of the Irish patriot Mac Swiney and sent a message of sympathy to the Irish people[2]. Countries in Asia and Africa under foreign yoke received even greater attention. When in 1920, the Congress adopted Gandhi's plan of non-cooperation against the British rule in India, the reason given for it was that the latter had failed in its duty towards the Indian Muslims in its handling of the Turkish question[3]. Allied with the Turkish question was the problem of the future of the Arab lands released from the grip of the Turkish Empire after the First World War, but placed under Britain and France under the mandate system. In 1922, the Congress passed a resolution, in which the need for freeing these lands from all non-Muslim controls was stressed[4].

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1. Sir Ivor Jennings had expressed a different opinion, although he has not given reasons for it. He writes: "Nor is it true, as some Indians have alleged, that the Indian struggle for freedom led to the independence of Ceylon". op. cit. p.26.
2. Report of the 25th Indian National Congress. Nagpur.p.95.
3. The Indian National Congress, 1920-23. Being a collection of the resolutions of the Congress and of the All India Congress Committee and of the Working Committee of the Congress from Sept. 1920 to December 1923. p.6.
4. Report of the 37th Indian National Congress. p.1.

If the Congress could be interested in countries as far away as Turkey, how much more it could be interested in the affairs of the neighbouring Island - Ceylon - can easily be guessed. The Congress was more interested in Ceylon, particularly because of the presence of a large number of Indian settlers here. In 1927, Mahatma Gandhi visited Ceylon and advised the Indian community to throw in their lot entirely with the Ceylonese. The visit was viewed with considerable suspiscion by the British Government in India and Ceylon. It is true that many of the sophisticated leaders of the Island did not even meet Mahatma Gandhi. Most of the newspapers of Ceylon observed a studious silence and the coverage, on the whole, was rather poor. The visit of Gandhiji, therefore, did not create any perceptible impression on the politics of the Island. On his return to India, he wrote in Young India that colonialism had done a great damage to the soul of Ceylon [1].

More important was a visit of Mr. Nehru, in 1931. Giving an account of this visit, Mr. Nehru writes in his autobiography that he was overwhelmed by the hospitality and friendliness of all class of people there. He adds:

> " It was very pleasant to find all this good-will, but it was often emberrassing also. At Nuwara Eliya groups of labourers, tea-garden workers and others would come daily, walking many miles, bringing gracious gifts with them - wild flowers, vegetables, home-made butter. We could not, as a rule, even converse together; we merely looked at each other and smiled. Our little house was full of these previous gifts of theirs, which they had given out of their poverty, and we passed

1. Young India. December 19, 1927.

them on to the local hospital and orphanages. We visited many of the famous sights and historical ruins of the island, and Buddhist monasteries, and the rich tropical forests. At Anuradhapura, I liked greatly an old seated statute of the Buddha. A year later, when I was in Dehra Dun Gaol, a friend in Ceylon sent me a picture of this statute, and I kept it on my little table in my cell. It became a precious companion for me, and the strong, calm features of Buddha's statue soothed me and gave me strength and helped me to overcome many a period of depression...I saw many Buddhist bhikkus (monks) in their monasteries and on the highways, meeting with respect wherever we went. The dominant expression of almost all of them was one of peace and calm, a strange detachment from the cares of the world"(1).

There is plenty of evidence to show that Mr. Nehru's visit resulted not only in intimate contacts between the Indian National Movement and the lower echelons of Ceylonese National Movement, it also led to the growth of political consciousness in some sections of Ceylon's population[2]. This also becomes clear from what he himself writes about these aspects of his visit:

" Ceylon fitted in with my mood then, and the beauty of the island filled me with delight. Our month of holiday was soon over, and it was with real regret that we bade good-bye. So many memories come back to me of the land and her peoples; they have been pleasant companions during the long, empty days in prison. One little incident lingers in my memory; it was near Jaffna, I think. The teachers and boys of a school stopped our car and said a few words of greeting. The ardent, eager faces of the boys stood out, and then one of their number came to me, shook hands with me, and without question or argument, said: "I will not falter". That bright young face with shining eyes, full of determination,

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1. An Autobiography. pp.271-72.
2. Refer to Sir Charles Jaffries: The Path to Independence. Pakeman in his monograph, Ceylon, deals with it at some length. Harry Williams also expresses this opinion in Ceylon, Pearl of the East. pp.358-360. The British authorities were always suspicious of the Indian Leaders' visit to Ceylon.

> is imprinted in my mind. I do not know who he was; I have lost trace of him. But somehow I have the conviction that he will remain true to his word and will not falter when he has to face life's difficult problems"(1).

The non-Cooperation Movement in India in 1932 assumed alarming proportions and all over the country there were firings and lathi charges, involving deaths and casualties. The jails began to be filled up with Civil Disobedience prisoners. Nothing of the kind happened in Ceylon. The National Movement continued to run on less romantic and more prosaic lines[2]. There were stray cases of a few Ceylonese joining hands with the Indians in their Civil Disobedience Movement. In January 1932, Mr. Nehru was arrested, and a Ceylonese gentleman joined him in the jail at Naini. Referring to this incident, Mr. Nehru writes:

> " Very few came to our little enclosures in Naini. My old companion, Narmada Prasad, joined us, and Ranjit Pandit and my cousin Mohanlal Nehru. A surprising addition to our little brotherhood of Barrack No.6 was Bernard Aluvihare, a young friend from Ceylon, who had just returned from England after being called to the Bar. He had been told by my sister not to get mixed up with our demonstrations, but, in a moment of enthusiasm, he joined a Congress procession - and a Black Maria carried him to prison"(3).

More important was the second visit of Mr. Nehru in 1939 soon after the outbreak of the Second World War. This visit was again viewed with a great suspicion both by the Government of India and the Government of Ceylon[4]. The historical context of this visit was the problem of the

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1. Ibid. p.272.
2. Holden: Ceylon. p.69.
3. Ibid. p.323.
4. Hulugalle. op. cit. Chap.4.

Indian labour in the Island. In 1933, the State Council of Ceylon had adopted a resolution to prevent the appointment of non-Ceylonese to public services thereafter, except on terms and conditions to be determined by the Council. Acting on this resolution, the Government of Ceylon, preceeded to retire compulsorily many hundreds of daily paid Indian workers from the Municipal services and from the services of various other departments of the Government[1]. The result of all this was a great stirring of political consciousness among the Estate labourers. The new adult franchise had affected them and about 1,70,000 became qualified to vote. Politicians soon got busy and Indians were returned for 2 of the Up country constituencies. Mr. Nehru came to Ceylon as an unofficial Ambassador with a view to studying the facts personally, so that some settlement between India and Ceylon might be possible. None was actually achieved. But the most important result of Mr. Nehru's visit was the setting up of a political body, known as The Ceylon Indian Congress[2]. It was this body which organised the famous Mooloya Strike in 1942. This was a new phenomenon in Ceylon and the Planting Community on the whole viewed it with a great horror[3]. It resulted in violence, during which a striker was shot and killed by the Police. Enquiries into this Mooloya incident led to a serious dispute between the Board of Ministers and the Inspector General of Police. The Governor supported the latter, a technically correct action, and the Ceylonese

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1. Kotelawala, Sir John: An Asian Prime Minister's Story. Chap.6.
2. Pakeman: Ceylon. pp.139-140.
3. Ibid. p.140.

Ministers resigned in a body. However, a commonsense compromise on both sides was reached and the affair blew over. It led, however, to considerable public criticism, and to the retirement from politics of Sir Baron Jayatilaka the Minister for Home Affairs. He was appointed Commissioner to India at New Delhi and his retirement from Ceylon's politics opened the way for the leadership of D.S.Senanayake.

§ 5

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN INDIA AND CEYLON

There are three principal spheres in which the Indian National Movement affected the National Movement in Ceylon in considerable measures: (i) the movement of women (ii) the labour movement and (iii) an awareness on the question of untouchability. So far as the women's movement is concerned, it may, in general, be mentioned that the British conquest of India had almost paralysed the social system in this country[1]. It was only gradually that women of the middle classes gradually began to adjust themselves to a new political order, for they did not wish to remain for ever isolated and away from the main stream of national life[2]. It was in 1878 that a few Indian girls began to be attracted by higher education. In 1888, for the first time, an Indian woman went abroad to study medicine, and for the first time, one of them took the Law Course at Oxford in 1892[3]. Provision of higher education for women

1. Cousins, Margaret: Indian Womanhood Today. 1947. p.29.
2. Ibid. p.31.
3. Status of Women in South East Asia. UNESCO. 1953. p.51.

was slow and halting[1]. The various socio-religious reform movements, such as the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj had given added impetus to this awakening[2]. The interesting fact about the Indian Women's Movement is that the first modern organisation of women was started in 1917 by the great pioneering women, Mrs. Margaret Cousins in Madras under the inspiration and leadership of that magnetic personality, Mrs. Annie Besant, and her Home Rule Movement, which was then a dynamic stream, giving expression to the people's restless urge for freedom[3]. Mrs. Besant was, interned by the British Indian Government as a result of this agitation and that gave added inspiration to women. The fact that the Indian Women's Association functioned mainly in the South had its impact on Ceylon's Women's National Movement[4]. Just as the women of India sent a deputation to Mr. Montague, then Secretary of State for India touring this country in 1919 to formulate political reforms for India, similarly, the women of Ceylon also sent a deputation to the Donoughmore Commission in 1927-28[5]. The demand of the Indian women for franchise had its echo in the Island[6]. One of the earliest acts of the various Provincial Legislatures in India had been to grant franchise rights to women, followed by permission to enter the Legislatures as members. In the elections of 1926, women participated[7]. But when the legislatures opened in 1927,

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1. Deshpande, S.R: Economic and Social Status of Women Workers in India. 1953. Chap.3.
2. Cousins. op. cit. p.56.
3. op. cit. p.61.
4. op. cit. p.76.
5. Donoughmore Report. 1928. Cmd. 3131. Chap.V.
6. Hussey: Ceylon and World History. Vol.3. Chap.2.
7. Jennings: The Constitution of Ceylon. Chap.I.

after the general elections, only a few women could come in as members as the franchise was restricted, being limited only to tax-payers. The services of women in the First World War and the great work done by several international organisations (such as Women's League for Peace and Freedom, the International Alliance, the International Council of Women etc.), led to a general recognition of the desirability of the women's participation in politics[1]. Several countries had granted franchise to women even before the first World War (New Zealand in 1893; Australia in 1902; Finland in 1906; Norway in 1913 and Denmark in 1915). English women got limited franchise in 1917, the year in which the Soviet women and the Netherlands gave full franchise to women[2]. Other countries followed suit. Ceylon was the second country in Asia to give the right to vote to women in 1931 (women had been enfranchised in Mongolia in 1924)[3]. Limited franchise was given to women in India in 1935. Thus, Ceylon had led the way so far as women's franchise was concerned[4].

Neither the women's movement in India nor that of Ceylon could be said to be of a militant nature. Mahatma Gandhi's first instinct was to reserve women for some special work and not allow them to participate in the general struggle. Only a few women were chosen to take part in the famous Salt Satyagraha which commended on April 6, 1930. On that memorable day, thousands of women strode

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1. Schapira,J.S: The World In Crisis. pp.66-67.
2. Ibid. p.68.
3. Women of India. Publications Division. 1958. New Delhi. p.64.
4. Ibid. p.65.

down to the sea like proud warriors. The national movement was proving too big even for Gandhiji[1]. Women were now coming out to play a full part in India's national struggle for independence. But it must be emphasised that instead of weapons, they bore pitchers of clay brass and copper; and instead of uniforms, the simple common Sari of village India. They had broken their age-old shell of social seclusion and burst into the fierce light of open warfare. Even Gandhiji said: "The part the women of India played will be written in letters of gold". They went into the cotton market, the grain market, and the gold bullion and auctioned salt for fabulous sums; once a tiny package fetched as much as Rs.10,000/-[2]. In the process they also courted arrest; they played a prominent part in organising youngsters into the Vanar Sena, or monkey army, as it was called in memory of the monkeys in Hindu mythology who had banded together to assist Rama[3]. The police, of course, made every attempt to disperse them, charging them with batons, and bringing on even mounted cavalry and even opening fire. Gradually women became dictators of the War Councils set up to direct the day to day activities. When the Indian National Congress was declared illegal, and no communications through the normal channels could be maintained, women came forward to act as messengers, thereby making possible countrywide communications of the Indian National Congress. They broke the Forest Laws (the British Government had

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1. Ibid. p.94.
2. Ibid. p.20.
3. Ibid. pp.21-22.

snatched away the forests from the villagers and reserved them for Government). They played a significant role in organising the cloth boycott and running the spinning wheels. Women like Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kriplani and Usha Mehta carried on as underground leaders[1]. When power was transferred to India in 1946, and the first Interim Government was set up at the Centre, it naturally included a woman[2]. Several women were also included in the Constituent Assembly and made significant contributions to its deliberations. Along with their participation in politics, the process of social emancipation of women went on.

The Women's Movement in Ceylon was bound to run on different lines although, in general, it was inspired by the Women's organisation in South India[3]. Mrs. Margaret Cousins, to whom we referred earlier, visited Ceylon in 1918 and it was largely her inspiration and also the inspiration of Mrs. Anne Besant which was responsible for giving to Ceylon a definite women's movement between the two World Wars[4]. Had the National Movement of Ceylon run on the lines on which the National Movement of India did, the Ceylonese Women's Movement would have also followed the pattern set by the Women's Movement of India[5]. As it is, the Women's Movement in Ceylon could not be militant at any stage of Ceylon's National Movement. But it must be stated

1. Ibid. p.30.
2. Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur.
3. Cousins. op. cit. p.80.
4. Low, Francis Sir: Struggle for Asia. Chap.12.
5. Rose. op. cit. pp.55 ff.

that the women of Ceylon were beginning to come out of their former obscurity and confinement to the home. They began to play a prominent part in social service, in cultural and learned societies, in sport, and even in politics[1]. They were, too, beginning to enter fields of regular employment other than teachers, nurses, and telephone operators. All this was not at all pleasing to the more conservative of the Ceylonese males. Admittedly it had not gone very far when the Second World War broke out. The first time a young Sinhalese woman appeared in the streets of Colombo wearing slacks there was a minor riot, from which she had to take refuge[2]. But the feminist movement had come to stay. To give a light-hearted but not insignificant illustration, when the Principal of the University College, having occasion to give a mild reprimand to one of the women students in 1941, remarked that he was quite sure it would shock her parents, her reply was that it was the duty of her generation to shock their parents. A reply like this would have been inconceivable twenty years earlier[3].

§ 6

ABOLITION OF UNTOUCHABILITY

In the third chapter, we referred to the caste system of Ceylon and mentioned the existence of the untouchables in the Island. The legendry origin of these

1. Pakeman. op. cit. p.111.
2. Ibid. p.111.
3. Ibid. p.111.

people is found in the folklore of Ceylon[1]. The fable narrated to me by an old man in the Island runs as follows:

> " Many centuries ago, a King of the Mahavamsa sent for his nobles and requested them to bring him a tender young stag from the forest for a feast to be held on the following day. The nobles on leaving the King's presence, themselves feasted and drank and carelessly left the hunting of the stag in abeyance. They were all expert foresters, and it was the simplest matter to go out and fetch in the beast at a moment's notice, but, unfortunately, none did so, each leaving the hunt to some one else. Within an hour of the time of handing over the stag to the royal cook, they found, to their terror, that none of them had been out hunting. One of them went into the forest atonce, but as always, when urgently needed, there was no game. He was at his wit's end when, chancing upon an isolated jungle hut, he found a tiny girl playing by herself with no one in sight. Hastily he killed the baby and dressed its flesh to look like venison. It was cooked as such and served to the king. The king discovered the crime by the taste of the flesh and in his terrible anger, out-lawed all his nobles and their descendants for ever, saying that never again in Lanka should they have land or possessions or be able to stand face to face with their fellow men. That is how the descendants or princes and nobles became the despised rat-eaters"(2).

This story, surprisingly, is not disputed by any other caste in Ceylon.

Until the turn of the 20th century, the Rodiyas were feared and occult powers were associated with them. People dreaded their touch lest they should become outcast themselves. The attempts at the abolition of untouchability made in India by leaders like Gopal Krishna Gokhle and later by Mahatma Gandhi, had their echo in Ceylon[3]. The development of rapid means of communications and transport and the

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1. Knighton,W: Forest Life in Ceylon. Chap.3.
2. Interview at Nuwara Eliya, Ceylon.
3. Vijayatunga: The Isle of Lanka. Chap.16.

growth of several aspects of modern civilization along with the growing pride in the ancient culture of the Island - all these factors have had their bearing on the break-up of the old caste prejudices in the Island[1]. Most of the political leaders like D.S.Senanayake, and Mr. Bandaranaike were quite conscious of the existence of untouchability in their country[2]. While in the case of India the national leaders did not believe in a policy of co-operation with the British Government, in the case of Ceylon, it was different. As we stated earlier, after 1931, most of the important political leaders in the Island were in the Government or in the Legislature and they could easily push through some of the social legislation designed to level up the backward communities in their country. In other words, the social content of nationalism in Ceylon came to be stressed much earlier than in the case of India[3]. It was felt in Ceylon that instead of formally abolishing untouchability by means of a law, it would be much better if a better and healthier social climate was created in which the levelling process would be far easier than otherwise[4]. After 1931 the net work of educational institutions was spread far and wide and a deliberate attempt was made to take education to the lowest layer of society. Primary education was made compulsory, and where Government schools could not be put up, the attempt was made

1. Ibid. pp.204 ff.
2. Sir John Kotelawala: An Asian Prime Minister's Story. Chapters 2-4.
3. Soulbury Report. Chap.VI.
4. Ibid. pp. 32 ff.

to make an appeal to individual philanthropy for funds to put semi-permanent buildings, where necessary[1].

A limited hospital system had been built up in Ceylon even before the inauguration of the Donoughmore Constitution[2]. Prior to 1931, the expenditure had for two or three years reached the figure of Rs.10 million. During the years of depression between 1931 and 1934, there had been a reduction to about Rs.9 million, but in 1935, the malaria epidemic sent expenditure upto Rs.11 million. By 1945, the expenditure had gone up to Rs.15 million. The important point to be noted is that a good part of the expenditure (about 10%) was spent for the medical care of the Rodiyas, and for another unfortunate community called as the Kinnaras[3]. Of themselves, the Kinnaras were a well-ordered and well-behaved village community, who possessed their own tanks, rice fields, chenas, nuts and gardens, all distinctly above the average as regards organization and cleanliness[4]. Their caste occupation is mat-weaving, and there is a mystery behind their origin, for they would appear to be a distinct race on their own. They have thick, short and curly hair, unlike any other race in Lanka, but although they are Buddhists, they were considered until recently of so low a caste that they were not permitted anywhere in the temple precincts or even within the enclosures[5].

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1. Sessional Paper I, 1962. Paras 46-63.
2. Ludowyk: Story of Ceylon. p.78.
3. Soulbury Report. Chap.6.
4. Lands and Peoples. Vol.4. pp.164 ff.
5. Williams, Harry. Ceylon. pp.289-308.

The movement of their temple entry in Ceylon was inspired by similar efforts on the part of Mahatma Gandhi in India [1]. An importent journalist of Ceylon, Mr. K.V.S. Vass, the Chief Editor of the Vira Kesari, Colombo, told me in the course of an interview with him that Mahatma Gandhi's visit in the Island in 1927 was mainly responsible for the mild beginning of this movement in the Island. By 1947-48, when power came to be transferred to Ceylon, the problem of untouchability, although not completely solved in the Island, had been considerably reduced in dimensions [2]. The reason for this was not merely education and the hospital system, it was also progressive provision of poor relief after 1931 [3]. The Poor Law Ordinance of 1939 squarely placed the burden of the relief to all the disabled persons on the local authorities. It is true that in practice this system operated only in Colombo, Kandy and Galle; the provisions of the Ordinance could not be extended to the interior for lack of funds and for the difficulties of administration [4]. So far as the Rodiyas and the Kinneras are concerned, there was hardly any local authority for them. The responsibility for these people rested on the shoulders of the Government of Ceylon. A beginning in this direction was made in 1937; when the second World War came to a close in 1945 attempts were made to extend poor relief to the Rodiyas and the Kinneras [5]. It is thus clear that

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1. Mills: Ceylon under British Rule. Chap.3.
2. Vijaytunga. op. cit. Chap.16.
3. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. 1926-54. Colombo. Chap.6.
4. Ibid. p.22.
5. Weerawardana: Ceylon and Her Citizens. pp.173-176.

although the methods and technique for social reforms in India and in Ceylon have been different, the reform Movement in India had a considerable impact on the Reform Movement in Ceylon.

§ 7

COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

Finally, we may refer to the influence of the Indian Labour Movement and the Indian Cooperative Movement on the corresponding movements in Ceylon. As far as cooperation is concerned, it is generally recognised that it is the solution to most rural economic problems, such as credit, production, and marketting in under-developed countries. Co-operation is a special mode of doing business[1]. It does not aim at enriching its votaries at the expense of others, nor does it endeavour to benefit others by doling out charity to them. Its object is to promote the economic welfare of its constituents through self-help and mutual help. The cooperative method can be applied to almost all forms of economic activity. It has been tried successfully in such a wide range of schemes as production, distribution, banking, supply, marketting, housing, insurance and so on. No country has, however, attempted cooperation as an omnibus cure all at once; each has shaped cooperative business to suit its particular needs. In India, cooperation was first introduced as a remedy for

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1. Satthianadhar, W.R.S: Cooperation. O.P.I.A. No.39. p.3.

rural indebtedness and only much later did it gradually embrace other forms [1]. It is only in respect of this aspect of cooperation that it becomes a relevant factor in the general national movement of India. Just as the social content of nationalism is the emancipation of women and the removal of untouchability and casteism, similarly the economic content of nationalism is the liberation of the peasantry, which means their emancipation from land, hunger and indebtedness. In both India and Ceylon, throughout the colonial period poverty, ignorance and improvidence, coupled with ancestral debt, poor soil, and several other factors made rural indebtedness more burdensome than elsewhere [2].

Just as the movement of Women's emancipation in India began in Madras during the last decades of the 19th century, similarly, the cooperation movement also began in Madras [3]. It is this factor which indicates clearly the influence of the Indian Cooperation Movement on the Cooperative Movement in Ceylon. In 1892, the Government of Madras appointed one of their senior officers, Sir Frederick Nicholson, to study the methods of land and agricultural banks which prevailed in Europe and to report how far they could be adapted to Indian conditions specially in the Madras Presidency in order to relieve rural indebtedness. After an elaborate investigation, Sir Frederick presented a valuable report, in which he recommended that

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1. Agarwala, A.N. And Govil, K.L: Current Economic Problems. 1948. Chap.III.
2. Ibid. p.117.
3. Ibid. p.118.

Rural Cooperative Credit Society should be started, more or less on the lines of the Raiffeisen Societies in Germany, to provide for credit on reasonable terms and promote thrift among the rural population[1]. This Report, at the instance of the Government of India, was circulated among the other Provincial Governments for consideration and action. A copy of this report was sent to Colombo also[2]. In 1901, Lord Curzon set up a Committee presided over by Sir Edward Law, the Finance Member of the Government of India, to examine the whole question in detail[3]. This Committee recommended the introduction and promotion of Cooperative Credit Societies and suggested a separate legal enactment for the purpose. Accordingly the Cooperative Credit Societies Act was passed in 1904. This set in motion a series of legislations in different provinces, under which quite a large number of Credit Societies sprang up. In 1912, the Cooperative Societies Act was passed, which permitted the registration of Cooperative Societies for other purposes besides credit, e.g. distribution, marketing, production, insurance etc. It also allowed the registration of Federations of Cooperative Societies for such purposes as mutual supervision and financing[4].

It was on the model of this Act that in 1912, the Cooperative Credit Societies Ordinance was passed in Ceylon, which, however, made provision for the setting up of Credit

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1. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.93.
2. Ibid. p.94.
3. Satthianadhan. op. cit. p.5.
4. Ibid. p.6.

Societies only[1]. It was not before 1921 that an Ordinance was passed in Ceylon to permit the establishment of other types of Cooperative Societies also. Government supervision on the Movement was ensured the same year by placing the Director of Agriculture, who received the title of Registrar of Cooperative Societies incharge of it. It was later thought that the work of the Director of Agriculture and the Registrar of Cooperative Societies should be seperated, and so a new Department under the Registrar of Cooperative Societies was set up. All these developments were closely following similar developments in India[2]. By 1939 in both countries, Cooperative Movement was no longer restricted to any particular strata of the population and was looked upon as an instrument of general economic uplift in accordance with the principles of thrift, self-help and mutual help. The second World War in both the countries gave a pillip to the Cooperation Movement[3]. In 1945, both in India and Ceylon, separate departments of Cooperative Development were set up. In short, it may be stated that this particular aspect of the national movement has run on parallel lines and in both countries, active support to it was given by the Government[4]. Originally, the movement was mainly concerned with the supply of credit to rural economy; after 1900, the movement was given a new direction by making consumer's welfare as one of its objectives. After 1940,

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1. Weerawerdana. op. cit. p.95.
2. Ibid. pp.96-97.
3. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon. pp.91-97.
4. Ludowyk: Story of Ceylon. p.56. Also see Rao,P.R.R: India and Ceylon.

there has been a striking tendency towards production and marketing. With the advent of independence, and greater state intervention in matters concerning the agricultural economy, cooperatives have been made the instruments of state action[1].

§ 8

LABOUR MOVEMENT

As far as the Labour Movement is concerned, here again, the impact of India has been of paramount importance. To put it in its proper perspective, let us briefly describe the growth of the Indian Trade Union Movement and then correlate it with the Trade Union Movement ~~and~~ in Ceylon. Even in the West, the trade union during the first half of the 19th century was under the ban of both law and public opinion. Its effective weapon, the strike, was banned as seditious, and its life principle, collective bargaining, was condemned as being in restraint of trade, and hence anti-social. The change came only with the enfranchisement of the workers. By the beginning of the 20th century, trade unions were legal in Western and Central Europe, in the United States, and in the British Dominions[2]. In India, it was only during the course of the first World War that the Trade Union Movement began to acquire some force[3]. The situation that was created by that war with regard to prices

1. Sovani, N.V: Economic Relations of India with S.E.Asia and the Far East. p.51.
2. Schapiro. op. cit. pp.104-105.
3. Agarwala and Govil. op. cit. Chap.V, 7.

and wages gave some impetus to the workers to put up organised fights for demanding redress of their grievences. Unions grew up in the beginning amongst postmen, railway employees and textile workers. None of the unions formed in the early period of the war are now in existence; most of them died out after a short but useful career, yet in some places like Ahmedabad, Jamshedpur and to a certain extent in the railways serious attempts were made to build up a strong trade union movement on sound lines[1].

The end of the war forced the pace of labour organisation in the country. In the first place, there was a good deal of awakening amongst the workers[2]. They appreciated the need of joint resistance to exploitation through collective action, and they now began to value the strength that organisation brings. This consciousness continued to grow throughout the period between the two world wars. Secondly, there was a somewhat rapid industrial growth after the termination of the first world war, on account of the adoption of the new economic policy by the British Government[3]. This created a large demand for workers and thereby also increased the necessity and opportunity for the formation of Trade Unions. On the passing of the Indian Trade Union Act in 1926, trade unions received further impetus[4]. The Act defined the legal

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1. Punekar, S.D: Trade Unionism in India. Chap.1.
2. Ibid. p.26.
3. Buchanan, D.H: Capitalist Enterprise in India. Chap.6.
4. Joshi, N.M: Trade Union Movement in India. pp.15 ff.

position of trade unions in definite and precise terms. It also specified the rights, privileges and obligations of the unions registered under the Act. Registration was optional, but the Act conferred certain valuable privileges on the registered bodies which were denied to those that chose to remain unregistered[1]. The rules for registration were that seven members should sign a form and submit it with a copy of the constitution of the union to the Registrar of Trade Unions in the Province. Inquiries were then held about the bonafides of the applicant. If the rules etc. of the union were in accordance with the Act, a certificate was issued[2]. The registered trade union was required to provide for a regular annual audit of its funds which could be spent only on certain specified objects[3]. As against these restrictions, the Act granted immunity from criminal liability to all trade union officials acting in furtherance of all legitimate objects of the union. Nor were they liable to be indicted for conspiracy. It did not, however, follow that employers would deal with even registered unions. Registration was not the same thing as recognition. Usually the employers imposed further restrictions before granting recognition to a union[4].

The number of registered trade unions in 1928-29 was 75 with a total membership of 1,81,077. Ten years later in 1938-39 the number of trade unions and membership

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1. Ibid. p.59.
2. Ibid. p.60.
3. Ibid. p.61.
4. Kelman, J.H: Labour in India. p.46.

jumped to 562 and 3,99,159 respectively[1]. During the Second World War, the growth of trade unions was steadily maintained. By 1944, the number of registered trade unions had increased to 818, claiming a total membership of 7,80,967[2]. In 1947, workers became more conscious of their rights and of the value of collective action[3]. In short, between the period 1900-1945, a number of factors encouraged the growth of Trade Unions in India - the declaration of the first World War and the consequently changing economic situation, the exploitation of the labour by political leaders, the non-Cooperation Movement of Gandhiji and his emphasis on the principle of identification of the leadership with the masses, the Bolshevik Revolution of Russia with its stress on the importance of labour, the setting up of the International Labour Organisation - these factors brought about a change in the attitude and outlook of the workers[4]. They were now unwilling to accept the traditional scheme of things; the general awakening led to a movement towards the organization of the labour[5]. The formation of the All India Trade Union Congress, though primarily created to select representatives to I.L.O. Conferences and Sessions, gave status to the Labour Movement and provided a platform where labour problems could be discussed and debated[6]. From

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1. Ahmad, Mukhtar: Trade Unions and Trade Disputes in India. p.21.
2. Ibid. p.26.
3. Punekar. op. cit. p.39.
4. Mathur, A.S, And Mathur, J.S: Trade Union Movement In India. Chap.2.
5. Ibid. pp.18-58.
6. I.L.O: Industrial Labour in India. p.25.

1925 onwards, India witnessed a large number of serious strikes. In 1925 alone, 134 strikes were reported, 33% of which proved successful[1]. In 1927, over five lakh workers were involved in more than 203 Industrial disputes. Lock-outs and hartals became regular feature of the Labour Movement. In 1928, a general strike of Cotton Mill workers in Bombay nearly paralysed the Textile Industry of the country[2]. In 1929, there were 141 strikes, in 1930, 148, in 1931, 166. After 1935, the advent of popular Ministries in the provinces, the provision of labour seats in the Legislatures, and the changed attitude of employers towards the Trade Union Movement led to an increased activity of Trade Unionism. The second World War gave a further fillip to the movement, and the Trade Unions of India made rapid progress not only in respect of numbers and membership, but also in respect of Trade Union Funds[3].

Now, the Labour Movement in India, on the whole, had a deep impact on the Labour Movement of Ceylon. This is reflected in the increasing number of strikes[4]. In 1925, the number of strikes was 34 which involved over a lakh workers; this number went on increasing progressively and, in 1935, there were 50 strikes in the Island, involving over 3 lakh workers[5]. Most of those forces, which had given encouragement to the Labour Movement in India, were also operating in the Island. During the years after the 1936

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1. Mathur and Mathur. op. cit. pp.22-23.
2. Ibid. p.24.
3. Kher,V.B: Indian Trade Union Law. Chap.4.
4. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.80.
5. Ibid. p.81.

elections, political parties began to emerge and several Marxist Groups came into existence. Stirring of political consciousness could now be observed among the Estate labourer[1]. Adult Franchise had effected them considerably and about 1,70,000 became qualified to vote. The politicians, therefore, got busy in order to exploit this huge voting bloc[2]. Just as, therefore, the Trade Union Movement in India grew under the impact of political pressures and their leadership came largely from the political parties, similarly Ceylon's Trade Unionism has also tended to be rather a political growth led by middle class Marxists or other politicians, not by workers themselves. Among the harbour workers, much trouble has been caused by rival Unions with leaders from the different Marxist groups. Just as the Trade Union Movement in India was split by mutual rivalries and jealousies, the Trade Union Movement of Ceylon, since its inception has suffered from similar ills[3]. The association of the Trade Union Movement with politicians in both countries was viewed with a great suspicion and distrust by the alien Government[4]. Employers in both India and Ceylon could easily solicit Government support to crush and suppress this infant Labour Movement. In fact, in both countries, the Trade Union Movement was considered to be just an ancillary of the broader national movement[5]. Lack of education and

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1. Rose. op. cit. Chap.4.
2. Ibid. p.55.
3. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon. p.69.
4. Weerawardana. op. cit. pp.82-84.
5. Holden: Ceylon. p.69.

ignorance of the workers was a common factor operating in both countries as an impediment to the organisation of the Trade Unions; it accounted for the predominance of the outside leadership[1]. The conservative outlook of labour has been responsible for their general reluctance to accept Trade Unionism. An average worker was just not interested in the Trade Union work; he tended to be docile and fatalistic and willingly took things for granted. The poverty and indebtedness of the worker rendered him unable to pay even the very low Trade Union contribution. Inadequacy of funds hampered Trade Union activities in both countries, quite as much as the want of leisure for Trade Union work[2]. The worker in both countries, tried to utilise his spare time for supplementing his meagre income. Throughout the period under review, lack of homogeneity and class solidarity amongst workers was a serious obstacle in the way of Trade Unionism. All these factors have been responsible for a bewildering multiplicity of Trade Unions in India and in Ceylon.

In India, there are today four National Federations- the A.I.T.U.C., the I.N.T.U.C., the H.M.S., and the U.T.U.C.[3] "Not only in every locality, but almost in every factory, one comes across more than one Trade Union Organisation"[4]. Each of these federations wants to have its hold in every factory. This multiplicity inevitably leads to rivalry amongst them. There is a lot of mudslinging and maligning of rival groups

1. Namasivayam: Parliamentary Government in Ceylon. p.180.
2. Pakeman: Ceylon. pp. 186, 225, 226.
3. Mathur and Mathur. op. cit. Chap.6.
4. Ibid. p.97.

of unions; fault finding and personal rivalry are the other consequences[1]. These rival Trade Unions, moreover, are necessarily small and weak; each one of them can claim only a minority of the total workers to be its members individually. None of them has adequate finances with which to maintain a paid staff or to start and sustain any benefit schemes for the workers[2].

In general terms it may be stated that the Trade Union Movement in Ceylon has tended to run on the same lines as in the case of India. The tendency has been to start far too many small unions. Between 1935 and 1947 four major Trade Union Organisations came into existence in Ceylon - the Ceylon Worker's Congress, the Democratic Worker's Congress, the Socialist Workers' Union and the General Workers' Union[3]. Of these, the only really large one is the Ceylon Workers' Congress, formerly known as the Ceylon Indian Congress. The President of this Union is Mr. Thondaman, who is a Ceylon Tamil and is one of the most important leaders of the Island. This entire body takes its inspiration from India; all its office bearers and all the members of the Executive Council are Tamils[4]. The Democratic Workers' Congress is led by Mr. A.Aziz. This body represents the million strong plantation labour. At one time Mr. Aziz and Mr. Thondaman were intimate friends; personal rivalries later on pushed them apart[5]. On major policies, there do not

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1. Lokanathan,P.S: Industrial Welfare in India. Chap.2.
2. Mathur and Mathur, op. cit. Chap.15.
3. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.85.
4. This is based on the inferences I drew from my conversations with several Trade Union Leaders in the Island.
5. This was confirmed by senior members of staff employed by both organizations.

appear to be any serious differences between the two organisations[1]. The other two Trade Unions do not constitute a major force in the politics of the Island. The difference between the Sinhalese and the Tamils does not very much divide the Trade Union Movement in Ceylon[2]. It is here that one can see some major differences between the Trade Union Movement of India and that of Ceylon. There is a much greater class consciousness in the working class of Ceylon than it is in the case of India. There seem to be two reasons for this. One is that the economic conditions of the Island are far better than those of India[3]. Ceylon is perhaps the most prosperous of the South-East Asian countries, next to the Federation of Malaya. Secondly, while in the case of India, the Industrial labour is, by and large, migratory in character, it is different in Ceylon[4]. Workers have not given up their village connections even to this day; factory employment and city life for them is just a passing phase. India does not have a permanent industrial labour class; the interest of the village migrants in Trade Unions has, therefore, been temporary. In other words, the village connection and migratory character of labour has been mainly responsible for the non-existence of strong and stable Trade Unions in this country[5]. In the case of Ceylon, there has always been a class of people who look upon factory

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1. On important occasions they stress almost common points.
2. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon. p.92.
3. Ibid, p.97.
4. Spencer, J.E: Asia, East by South. pp.192-193.
5. Kelman, op. cit. Labour in India. p.126.

work as their permanent and only source of livelihood[1]. They have, therefore, become interested in the improvement of working and service conditions. The emphasis in Ceylon has been on the basic principles of Trade Unionism which is looked upon as a dedication to a noble cause. It is not considered as merely a means of livelihood; it is supposed to demand the manifestation of a true spirit of service[2]. A Trade Union is considered a repository of the hopes and aspirations of its members. The result of the Trade Union activity in Ceylon has been that a whole conciliation and arbitration machinery of Industrial Courts, Joint Industrial Councils, Labour Tribunals and Wages Board has been set up for the settlement of industrial disputes[3]. Since strike is a legitimate Trade Union weapon in the fight for improved working and living conditions, the number of strikes in the Island has been increasing[4].

§ 9

CONCLUSIONS

We may conclude that from the earliest times to the 6th century, the political tradition of India and Ceylon had acted and reacted on each other. The cultural and political relations between the two countries were almost disrupted with the advent of the Europeans. During the 19th century, the beginnings of freedom movement can be traced in both countries. While it is true that the ancient

1. Spencer. op. cit. p.194.
2. Weerawardana. op. cit. p.83.
3. Ibid. p.84.
4. Pakeman. op. cit. pp.139-140.

political tradition such as Divine Kingship does not very much influence the political relations of the two countries, it does emphasize that the political landscape of Ceylon has been similar to that of India. During the 19th and the 20th centuries, the demand for constitutional and political reforms in both India and in Ceylon, was made by the middle class which too arose as a result of the British rule. In both countries, political leadership was provided by the classes of lawyers, doctors, journalists and intellectuals. When these people found the Europeans holding all the high posts in Government, their discontent was inevitable. Although Ceylon had been governed not as part of India but as a separate colony, the political and constitutional advance in India had its echo in Ceylon. In both countries, in the earlier phase of the national struggle, the middle class leadership did not ask for independence or even for representative government; and in both it was only after 1919 that the demand for independence crystallized. The major difference in the political tradition of India and Ceylon from 1900 to 1947 has been that while in India, the principle of non-cooperation was tried, in Ceylon, the leaders cooperated with the British Government in giving a fair trial to the changing constitutions of the Island. But to infer from this development that the freedom movement in India had no effect on the movement in Ceylon is not borne out by facts. Nor is it correct to say, as Sir Ivor Jennings has said, that the Indian struggle for freedom did not lead to the independence

of Ceylon[1]. As we have repeatedly stressed in the course of this work, after the British Government decided to transfer power to India, it would have been absolutely impossible for them to retain their foot-hold in Ceylon. The freedom of the two countries was in fact one question. The changing social and political order in India was bound to have its repercussions on the social and political systems in the neighbouring countries. It is equally incorrect to say that the complications of the Indian problem led to the postponement of Ceylon's independence by atleast two years[2]. In point of fact, India became free earlier by atleast six months. In fact the most important reason why the leaders of Ceylon did not follow the policy of Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience Movement, was that they were more Westernized than the political leaders of India. Ceylon did not, and could not, produce a leader of the eminence and calibre either of Gandhi or Nehru. Again, the feeling in Ceylon throughout was that the liberation of India would automatically have its compulsive effect on the question of Ceylon's independence. These reasons explain the comparatively quieter national movement of the Island. But there was never any doubt about the fact that the roots of Ceylon's freedom clearly lay in India's freedom movement in its various moods and aspects. When in March-April, 1947, freedom of India was in sight, our leaders called in the first Asian Relations Conference in Purana Qila which was attended by 250 delegates from 25 Asian

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1. The Approach to Self-Government. p.26.
2. Ibid. p.27.

countries, including Ceylon. It must be remembered that Nehru had always insisted on giving an international perspective to India's freedom movement. In this Conference, Ceylon was represented by a powerful delegation which expressed fears of India's domination in the context of a large Indian population in the Island. With the exception of this irritant, the political tradition of India and Ceylon would always tend to bring the two countries together.

Finally it may be stated that while during the British period the influence of Hinduism and Sanskrit receded in the background, with the removal of the British rule in 1947-48, Ceylon has begun to lean once more on India both in respect of cultural revival and political tradition. Nothing illustrates this more sharply than the fact that India's policy of non-alignment had almost a compulsive effect on the position of Ceylon. An analysis of this aspect of Indo-Ceylon political tradition is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But it may, in general, be stated that just as the nationalist forces in India solidly backed up the principle of non-alignment and socialism, similarly, after some initial hesitation, Ceylon's nationalism also acquired these dimensions. Inspite of the introduction of the Universal Adult Franchise as early as 1931, it was only in the 1956 elections, that the rural middle class successfully carried the monopoly of power, which an urban-oriented and pro-West elite had enjoyed since independence. The rise of these forces brought in its wake religious and Buddhist revival and a resurgence of the traditional culture. This socio-cultural renaissance was closely linked with nationalist

fervour and had its impact on politics to the extent that it condemned everything that was foreign.

Though it was not strictly anti-West, it did manifest the desire of the Ceylonese people to oppose any policy which subordinated their own interests or which tied them to the West in such a way that limited their freedom of action. As such, it was more thoroughly Asian in its outlook than the policies of the UNP. It was the support of these forces which, coupled with several other forces and factors, brought victory in 1956 to the MEP led by Bandaranaike. As soon as he formed the Government, he put Ceylon on the map of non-alignment. The political tradition of India, which had had its impact on Ceylon's Women's Movement, the abolition of untouchability, and the Labour Movement, now over-took completely the Island in respect of foreign policy also. The principles of democratic socialism, which were given a fair trial in India, after 1951, had similarly their echo in Ceylon. In short, just as India's Nationalist tradition from 1900 onwards centred round the principles of democracy, representative institutions, economic and social emancipation of the people, abolition of untouchability, liberation of women, an independent foreign policy, based on the concept of friendship with all countries, opposition to colonialism and racial discrimination, an active support to International organisation as well as regional cooperation, similar has been the evolution of Ceylon's political tradition. Had India in 1949 decided to break away from the Commonwealth of Nations, it would have been

extremely difficult for Ceylon to retain its links with that body. It is thus clear that in respect of political tradition, India and Ceylon stand very close to each other, both in ancient past as well as today.

CHAPTER V.

INDO-CEYLON ECONOMIC RELATIONS (1900-1947).

§ 1

CONDITIONING FACTORS

In order to understand the pattern of Indo-Ceylon economic relations, it is necessary to keep in mind the general economic conditions of the Island, which determined its trade relations with the neighbouring countries. The traditional socio-economic order of Ceylon was one of village communities, producing for subsistence, and of village families knit together by a complex of customs and institutions. Ceylon, like other traditional civilizations, had an organic community with a living culture; the folk songs, folk dances, handicrafts and traditional agriculture were the signs and expressions of the way of life and people's "immemorial experience". It had its own technology, considered efficient in its day and yielding a satisfactory rate of output, with its balance between individual effort and collective effort, and its pattern of capital accumulation which kept pace with the growth of population.

This subsistence economy of Ceylon which continued to function until the coming of the European powers determined her economic relations with the South-East Asian countries. Her economic relations with them were closer than its political contacts[1]. The ships that touched at Ceylon's ports from early times no doubt carried on some trade between Ceylon and S.E.

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1. Mendis, G.C: Ceylon Today and Yesterday. p.10.

Asia. The sea voyages of those days were, of course, extremely perilous. We have an eye-witness account of the journey of the Chinese pilgrim Faihien who embarked in a large merchant vessel at Tamralipti (Tamluk) in Bengal and, sailing day and night, reached the Island of Ceylon after 14 days[1]. The records of the Gupta age throw some light upon the extent and objects of India's trade with Ceylon. In the middle of the 6th century, the ports of East and the West coasts of India were linked together by the intermediary of Ceylon which, by virtue of its central position, became the grand emporium of trade in the Indian Ocean[2]. The testimony of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims conclusively proves that there was a regular connection in the 4th and 7th centuries between Tamralipti, the great sea port of Bengal, and Ceylon. It was through Ceylon that India's trade with other S.E.Asian countries was conducted[3]. As far as the objects of trade were concerned, these were mostly agricultural and plant products, such as clove and sandal-wood, which were sent from the East coast of India to Ceylon and thence exported to the western coasts and even to Persia and the Ethiopian coast[4].

We know definitely from the testimony of Cosmas, that in the 6th century horses were imported from Persia and India into Ceylon. Pearls from the junction of the Tamraparni river with the sea formed the most precious product of the Pandya country in the time of Kalidas, while Hiuen-tsang knew

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1. The Classical Age (Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan). p.631.
2. Ibid. p.589.
3. Ibid. p.590.
4. Ibid. p.589.

the same land under the name of Malakutar as a depot for sea pearls. To judge from the extensive references to the use of pearls in the Gupta Age, the pearl trade of the Pandya country must have been very important in that period. Coral was found in the sea separating India from Ceylon in the times of Kalidas according to an allusion in the Raghuvansa[1]. The literature of the Gupta period contains occasional references to Chinese silk, while Cosmas in the 6th century includes it in the list of articles which were sent to Ceylon from the East[2]. The pearls of Ratnapura prominently figure in the literature of that period. The trade between India and Ceylon was indeed very brisk. There is even evidence that Kashmiri goods were exported to Ceylon. The contacts between Kashmir and Ceylon are proved by more than one source. Gunavarman, a Kashmir prince, became a Buddhist monk in the 6th century. When he was 30 years old, the king of Kashmir died and he was invited by the Ministers to ascend the throne. Gunavarman refused and retired to a forest; he then went to Ceylon and preached Buddhism[3]. This kind of contact was bound to be accompanied by a great deal of economic and commercial activity. Cultural and political relations are sometimes the results of economic contacts.

The account of the war of Parakramabahu, the Great, against Burma makes it clear that Ceylon had direct trade relations with Burma as well as Cambodia. In the last quarter of the 13th century, Ceylon became a definite unit

1. Ibid. p.591.
2. Ibid. p.591.
3. Ibid. p.599.

not only in the S.E.Asian trade, but also in the trade which extended from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf to China and Japan. The Muslims in India began to trade briskly with Ceylon in the 9th century, and they had established a few outposts along the route. In the 15th century the whole of the trade with the East seems to have fallen into their hands. Making use of the monsoons, they travelled from Basra and Aden to Gujarat and Malabar and from Bengal to Malacca and thence to Malabar. They travelled from port to port, providing each country with the goods it needed and taking away from it what they could sell elsewhere[1]. It was this trade that the Portuguese took over in the 16th century.

With the coming of the Portuguese and the Dutch, the traditional socio-economic order of Ceylon which had begun to decline much earlier started crumbling. The Dutch particularly encouraged the cultivation of commercial crops; they developed communications by the construction of canals and gave an impetus to the development of crafts. The effect of the Portuguese and the Dutch interlude (in the history of Ceylon) on the Indo-Ceylon economic relations was that the the trade between the two countries began to decline. Nevertheless, the chief country with which Ceylon traded was still India, the trade being carried on mostly by the Dhonies[2] which plied to and fro with the monsoon. This position continued in the 19th century. About 4/5ths of the imports, particularly grain and cloth, came from India, and cinnamon largely went to India[3].

1. Mendis,G.C. op. cit. pp.10-11.
2. A vessel.
3. Silva, Colvin: Ceylon under The British Occupation.p.451.

Unhappily the commercial jealousy of the East India Company, manifested in tarrif hostility, seriously impeded the export trade. For example, the <u>arrack</u> trade received a severe blow by the imposition of a prohibitory import duty in 1812. The tobacco trade was handicapped by the Travancore monopoly which the Company supported for political reasons; and a lucrative market was closed to Ceylonese salt by the Bengal Salt monopoly[1]. But rice which is the mainstay of life in Ceylon continued to be imported from India. In the latter half of the 18th century, the annual imports of rice from Bengal, Malabar and Coromandel averaged 70 thousand to 80 thousand bags of about 170 lbs. each, or a value of about £ 2,50,000[2]. Governor North found it necessary on his arrival in Ceylon to import some 60 thousand bags of rice at Government expense in view of "an almost entire want of rice in the Island". He estimated that Government would have to import at least 50,000 bags annually[3]. The years 1799 and 1805 were famine years, and Government had to import from India grain to the value of over £ 1,00,000, on each occasion. In the drought of 1812 Government imported grain to the value of over £ 1,00,000. The year 1813 also witnessed a severe famine and the total imports of grain to Ceylon from India rose to a value of @ 4,00,000[4]. Similarly, to meet the shortage of cattle, North imported buffaloes from India. He

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1. C.O.54. Colebrooke's Evidence before the Committee for East Indian Affairs.
2. De Meuron's Report, para 36.
3. C.O.54. North to Court of Directors, 26th Feb. 1799.
4. C.O.54, 46. Brownrigg to Liverpool, 23rd Jan.1813.

imported over 3,000 heads of cattle, mostly cows, to counteract a serious mortality in 1800[1]. It would thus be clear that the trade between India and Ceylon during the first half of the 19th century was rendered haphazard because of the irregular customs policy followed by the British rulers in India.

An attempt to give it some order was made by Governor Barnes, who aimed at making tarrifs a protective weapon and also an instrument for encouraging the trade between Ceylon and England. To that end, the customs duties were revised in 1820. The import duties on grain and cloth (being "such articles of import from India as are the growth of the Island, and the produce of which therein can be increased") were raised to 8% and 12% respectively[2]. Similarly, the import duties on sugar, jaggery, coconut oil, candles and curry stuffs were increased. On the other hand, the duties on goods imported from England were considerably reduced - English cotton, for instance, receiving a 50% preference over India[3]. Similarly, the export duties on "all articles exportable to England" were taken off, e.g., on coffee, cardamoms, coconut oil, and coir cables. The results of these policies are not difficult to see. They led to a decline in the Indo-Ceylon trade, both in respect of export as well as import. The customs duties had a most ruinous effect on the little trade of Ceylon[4]. The mode of appraising

1. C.O.54. North to Court of Directors. 18th Feb.1801.
2. Silva. op. cit. p.448.
3. Ibid. p.449.
4. C.O.416. Gibson's Evidence.

values according to local market prices was decidedly unfair. The import duties were very heavy, varying between 10% and 35% and even 60%, and in the case of Indian cloth, so steeply graded as to be a severe handicap. The following extract from the Diary of Mr. Rabinal of Galle, a European merchant of Ceylonese birth, gives a general picture of Indo-Ceylon trade in 1830 :

> " The European merchants in Ceylon import all the exports of London that are sent to India (wine and spirits, iron and ironware, cloth and cotton, earthen and glass-ware, millinery, haberdashery, oilmanstores, confectionery, and other luxuries), as well as wine from Madeira, French wines and spirits, rice, wheat, grain and staves from Bengal, Bombay and Madras; tea, sugar candy, soft sugars, silks, crockery ware and nankeens generally from Singapore and ebony, coffee, (cardamoms and bees-wax limitedly) a little coir rope, arrack and deer horns to London; arrack, ebony, oil, rope, bache-de-mar and shark's fins (and formerly tobacco and arecanuts) are exported to Penang and Singapore; coffee, rope, arrack and planks to Bombay; oil, and coir yarns to Bengal...The native merchants import much grain from Bengal, Bombay, Madras, and Chittagong. The Laccadive and Maldive boats also bring rice from Bengal...and take ghee, oil, coffee and coconuts to Calcutta and their homes... Petty native merchants make an annual voyage with the native agents to Calcutta and import English piece goods from there. The chetteies are a distinct set of agents who are the exclusive importers of India manufactured cloth. They carry on business for the merchants of Southern India...They supply tobacco to the Travancore Government"(1).

Broadly stated, from 1799 to 1833 the British policy positively discouraged any extensive trade between Ceylon and India. It was only in those respects where things could not be exported to Ceylon from anywhere else and where Ceylonese products could not be exported with profit to any

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1. C.O. 416.

other area that India appeared in the picture. The bulk of coconut, which was one of the most important products of the Island, was locally consumed; its export was usually prohibited in times of famine. The chief foreign market was Coromandel, where it gave a profit of about 5-10%. The quantity exported increased from an average of about 3 million nuts per year in the period 1808-13 to about 4½ million nuts per year in the period 1825-33. Ceylon also exported annually to India an increasing amount of copra and jaggery (crude sugar or Gur). In the period 1806-13 Ceylon exported quantitities of coconut oil varying between one thousand gallons and ten thousand gallons, mostly to India. After 1813 this was diverted to Malacca and Singapore. Similarly, Ceylonese coffee, the major portion of which was exported to India in the beginning, was later on diverted to England. A certain quantity of timber brought down to the ports in Ceylon was exported to India; but later on, the timber trade was cut off because of the excise duties which had a crippling effect. During this period, Chanks found a very favourable market in India. The Chank was a sea-shell which was sawed into rings of different sizes and worn by Indian women as an ornament on their arms, legs and fingers. The great market for the sale of these shells was Bengal, where they had a religious significance in consequence of which thousands of them were buried with the bodies of opulent and distinguished persons in that part of India. Presumably this was the cause of the great and constant demand for them. With the general awakening of the people in the second half of the 19th century, this practice declined

and consequently the trade in Chanks dwindled down.

The maritime districts of Ceylon afforded a supply of salt exceeding domestic needs. Nevertheless, a certain quantity appears to have been imported from India until 1799, when Governor North prohibited it [1]. Instead, the idea of exporting it to Bengal was mooted, and in 1799 the Worcestershire bringing rice from Calcutta was sent back with a cargo of salt [2]. But unfortunately, the Bengal monopoly presented an insuperable obstacle, specially after Ceylon was transferred to the Crown. North's efforts in 1803 to secure its relaxation failed, as Calcutta saw no reason to change the established system of drawing the supplies for Bengal exclusively from within the Company's territories [3]. In 1813 the entry of a small cargo was permitted in Calcutta as a special concession, but further trade was prohibited, although Brownrigg strongly urged it on grounds of reciprocity [4]. How promising a market Ceylon was thus deprived of becomes clear from the fact that, when a failure of supplies in Bengal led to a demand for Ceylonese salt in 1832, over 1,00,000 bags of salt were delivered during a period of 15 months. Once again an attempt was made to press for a permanently open trade but to no avail [5]. Although the Indian market was closed, the Malaya Peninsula (mainly supplied from India) offered a promising market, in which Ceylon might have participated,

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1. De Mauron's Report, para 33.
2. C.O. 13.
3. C.O.54. North to Hobart. January 1, 1804.
4. C.O. 47. Brownrigg to Bathurst. April 30, 1812.
5. C.O.118. Horton to Goderich. October 26, 1832.

especially as Ceylonese salt was superior to the Coromandel article. North had paid some attention to the possibilities of this market, but nothing appears to have been done to develop it[1].

What was true of salt was also true of textiles. At one time, Indian cloth was extremely popular in Ceylon and found a ready market there. Governor North, however, in 1799, lowered the stamp duty, which was always levied only in Jaffna and Mannar, to 5% in order to help local cloth to compete with that from the Carnatic.[2] He also arranged for the supply of better seeds of cotton to cultivators and of better quality cotton to spinners and weavers.[3] But the manufacturers were comparatively inexpert and they could not compete with Indian cotton. In 1824 import duties were increased on all imported cloth from India, and by 1833 even this trade dwindled to a very low figure.

§ 2

Development of Ceylonese Economy: 1833-1947

The period from 1833 to 1947 was most significant from the point of view of the growth and development of Ceylon's economy. In the second Chapter, we referred to the Colebrooke Reforms which constituted a very important landmark in the history of Ceylon. These reforms put an end to Rajakariya - a system under which every inhabitant of Ceylon owed to the state the obligation of customary service, they

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1. C.O. 54. North to Hobart. November 24, 1802.
2. C.O. 54. North to Court of Directors. October 5, 1799.
3. C.O. 26. North to Board of Revenue. August 12, 1801.

paved the way for the development of commerce in the Island. These customary services fell into two categories - one compulsory and paid, and the other, compulsory and gratuitous. The latter class was best exemplified by the universal liability - unrelated to, and distinct from, tenurial obligations - of every inhabitant to service in the repair and unkeep of the roads and bridges in his particular district. The former found its outstanding illustration in the duty of the Chaliyas (the modern Salagama caste) to serve in the Cinnamon Department[1]. The Rajakariya system roughly corresponded to feudalism in Europe. The chief objection to this system in the eyes of Colebrooke was that it prevented mobility of labour and that it bound the people to their land; they could not give it up and had to render services for holding it. They could not change their occupations and take to new types of work such as crafts or business and trade as their sole work. In short, as Mendis has put it, Rajakariya "hindered the transition from a feudal to a commercial capitalist society"[2].

The Colebrooke Reforms also abolished the monopolies and other government activities in agriculture and trade. The monopolies were worked through Rajakariya and when Rajakariya was abolished they could not be maintained unless alternative arrangements were made. Colebrooke did not want them continued in any form whatsoever, as they had prevented free trade and private enterprise which

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1. For an account of the Salagama see C.O. 416.
2. Ceylon Today and Yesterday. p.65.

he ardently advocated[1]. His reasoning was that unless the monopolies were abolished, there was little chance for people to take to trade and commerce. Thus the first beginnings of modernization of Ceylon's economy were made. But a sudden change did not take place owing to the general conditions prevailing in the Island on the eve of the Colebrooke Reforms. Ceylon, at that time, was a land of villages and there were hardly any towns besides Colombo, Galle and Jaffna[2]. The villages usually lay in valleys where water was available for paddy cultivation. Apart from the land bordering on the paddy fields and huts in which people lived, the rest of the area was generally covered with jungles. In the mountainous part of the wet zone, most land which was later covered by tea and rubber was dense forest[3]. There were a few plantations, but these were limited mainly to the Peradeniya and Gampola areas. Ceylon had few economic assets and the economy was mainly a peasant economy[4]. For the villagers in the Dry Zone, life was even harder[5]. Most of them, until the old irrigation system began to be restored, eked out a pitiful existence, having to rely usually on a small village tank for the supply of water which depended on the seasonal rains. If

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1. Ibid. Chap. 8.
2. Pakeman: Ceylon. Chap.5.
3. Lands and Peoples. The World in Colour. Vol.4. Ceylon. p.164.
4. Weerawardana: Ceylon and her Citizens. Chap.II.
5. For a fascinating study of this life, refer to Leonard Woolf, The Village in the Jungle. It is a remarkably accurate picture of the decay of a Dry Zone Jungle village. Also see Vijayatunga, Grass for My Feet.

the rain failed, the plight of the villagers became woeful[1].

The people in general produced their own food and their wants were very few. There were few roads to break their isolation. People used foot paths for travelling and few went far from their homes except for purposes of pilgrimage[2]. Much of the better quality land was attached to the _Viharas_ and _devales_; the peasants and craftsmen were poor. There was hardly any middle class among the Sinhalese and the Tamils in the rural districts. There was little trade, and it was confined mainly to Colombo and the region around. But even in this area, there was hardly any Ceylonese with sufficient capital to start trade on a big scale or to open plantations and wait for years to benefit from the investment. Most of the land was held to be Crown land. In 1834 the Government made the first beginning of selling about 50 acres of this land; yet there was no opening for plantation and no expansion of either the internal or the foreign trade[3]. There were no customers for the Crown land, because it was not fit for cultivation and mostly was uninhabited. There was no incentive for cultivation or plantation, because once the land was cleared, the Kandyan villagers would lose some of their customary rights; they could no longer use the jungle for fuel, for pasture, for hunting or for _chena_ cultivation[4].

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. Chap.I.
2. Weerawardana. op. cit. Chap.I.
3. Ibid. p.18.
4. Ibid. p.20.

The economic conditions of the Island began to change about five years after the Colebrooke Reforms were introduced; and the change came not as a result of internal factors, but of external forces. The demand for coffee in Europe suddenly increased[1]. Production in the West Indies became disorganised owing to the liberation of the slaves, and the planters could not satisfy the British demands. In 1835 the Imperial Government helped Ceylon further by reducing the import duty on Ceylonese coffee to the same level as on West Indian coffee[2]. About the same time Robert Tytler, who had studied the methods of coffee cultivation in Jamaica, showed how coffee could be made a paying concern in Ceylon[3]. The British officials in Ceylon, who alone had capital, rushed to grow coffee; so did capitalists in India and Britain. The sales of crown lands went up and the coffee industry began immediately[4]. Within ten years 367 plantations were opened and about Rs.30,000,000 were invested in the enterprise. Mr. Pakeman has thus described the process of the opening of land for coffee cultivation in Ceylon :

> " It was after the middle thirties that coffee planting became financially attractive. The representations of Sir Edward Barnes to the home Government that the import duty on Ceylon coffee should be brought down to the same level as that on coffee from the West Indies - the famous Blue Mountains Jamaica coffee - were successful. There was at this juncture a drop

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. p.71.
2. Silva: Ceylon under the British occupation. Chap.XIV.
3. Pakeman. op. cit. p.71.
4. Ibid.

> in the export of West Indian coffee, and Ceylon coffee managed to infiltrate into the world market. The possibilities became known in Britain, and enterprising individuals with capital, say two or three thousand pounds, came out to Ceylon. The sales of Crown land went up enormously; in nine years 294,526 acres were bought. This was absurdly low to begin with, and the story of these sales is not always very edifying. Some coffee estates were quickly re-sold at fancy prices"(1).

In this cultivation the Sinhalese did not play a leading part. As we stated earlier, the land owners had hardly any capital; nor did they show any enthusiasm for large scale agriculture. It was mainly left to emigrants from Britain to show enterprise, to come out to Ceylon, buy the land, clear up the jungle and plant coffee. In this adventure, many lost their money through ignorance or incompetence, and their lives by malaria. In any case, by the forties, Ceylonese coffee began to boom. It was the coffee boon which first led to the importation of Tamil estate workers from India, although certain trades which were contrary to Ceylonese caste customs had been carried on by individual Tamils for sometime. In the early seventies of the 19th century, the annual export of coffee amounted to between 8 lac and 9 lac cwt; rightly, therefore, it was said that Ceylon was ruled by King Coffee[2]. Very soon it became the major export industry of the Island. Gradually, the low country Sinhalese began to take to coffee planting[3]. But unfortunately in 1869 a leaf disease spread in Ceylon, by the end of the seventies it had taken firm hold, and in the eighties the coffee industry

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1. Pakeman. op. cit. p.71.
2. Silva. op. cit. Chap.XII.
3. Ginsburg (Ed): The Pattern of Asia. Chap.XXVIII.

gradually collapsed[1]. By 1889 the export of coffee had fallen to 1,00,000 cwt. The ravages of the disease also coincided with keener competition from other coffee producing countries, particularly from Brazil[2]. The collapse of the coffee trade in the 1880's ruined many planters, and brought misery to many imported labourers. The estates became worthless, and many owners sold them at fantastically low prices. The position of Ceylon's economy was really desperate. The situation was saved first by the plantation of Cinchona, from the bark of which tree quinine is derived; and then, of tea which had been introduced in 1883 just before the great coffee failure[3]. Tea, as we buy it in the shops, is the withered and dried leaf of a particular kind of camellia. The bush, if left to itself, would grow into a tree about 20 feet high, but it is constantly kept pruned to a height of 3 or 4 feet in order to promote a continual supply of fresh young shoots, and it is the leaf buds of these which are picked for drying[4]. Consequently, tea-picking has to be done by hand and the tea plantation requires a large labour force, averaging one to the acre as opposed to 1 to 3 acres in rubber plantations and 1 to 4 or 5 acres in peasant coconut groves[5]. This labour force has been supplied by the importatic of more and more Tamil labourers from South India, and the tea-plantation manager has to be a man well skilled in looking

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1. Ibid. p.671.
2. Ibid. pp.671-672.
3. Ibid. p.672.
4. Spencer: Asia East by South pp.192-193.
5. Geographical Review. Vol.44, 1954. p.275.

after people.

Tea grows best at a height of 3,000 to 5,000 feet, with the orderly plantations forming a monotonous kind of scenery. To prevent soil exhaustion and erosion, the tea bushes are usually interspersed with 'shade' trees and sometimes with leguminous weeds[1]. The withering, fermenting and drying are simple processes and are completed in a 'factory' usually situated in the middle of the tea plantation itself and close to the manager's bungalow. By 1881, in short, 13,500 acres were under tea and by 1889 the acreage had increased to over 200,000[2]. While in 1888 23 million pounds of tea were exported, in 1963 the total export had grown to 450 million pounds[3]. Thus the new crop did very well indeed in the Island. From the very outset, it had to be worked on a more or less scientific basis, for the processing of tea was a much more complicated affair than preparing coffee. The Sinhalese coffee producers had already been ruined by the coffee crash of the seventies and eighties; this meant that the tea planters would all be Europeans, particularly Britons[4]. In the first phase of tea plantation, the tea industry was run by individual private enterprise. In the late ninetees there came about a slump in tea, which compelled rationalization of the industry with the aid of

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1. Ibid. p.277.
2. Sir Drummond Shiels (Ed): The British Commonwealth. A Family of Peoples. Chap.XIII.
3. The Statesman's Year Book. 1964. p.493.
4. Patterson: The Far East. A Social Geography. Chap.6. pp.157 ff.

better methods of cultivation and greater mechanization[1]. Rationalization would mean more capital which, in its turn, implied the passing away of the individual enterpriser and the setting up of companies. With the coming of companies, shares came into existence and shares brought the share holders. The owners sometimes worked the estates themselves, but quite often they ran the business with the help of managers, and themselves lived at home. With this development, firms of brokers also came into existence.

Next in importance to tea came rubber whose production received a stimulus from the tea slump of the nineties. Rubber had been first introduced into the Island in 1876 with the bringing of hevea rubber seeds from Brazil[2]. Ceylon became the centre from which Brazilian rubber reached the rest of the Far East. In the development of the rubber plantations Ceylonese planters played a significant role, and in the course of time it became Ceylon's second most important export crop[3]. The rubber tappers were, of course, Indian Tamils. The uses of rubber increased immensely with the development of the automobile industry, particularly after the first World War. Between 1920 and 1947 the area under rubber in the Island amounted to about a quarter of a million acres[4].

The third export crop, which was developed for its cash value during this period, was the coconut. "It differs

1. Weerawardana, op. cit. Chap.II.
2. Ludowyk,E.F.C: The Story of Ceylon. pp.203-4.
3. Patterson. op. cit. Chaps. VI and VIII.
4. Rose,S: Politics in Southern Asia. Chap.4.

from all others, however, in that it is primarily a consumption crop which was later expanded for its cash value as an export. Coconuts are, like the bamboo in South China and Kaoliang in Manchuria, an 'all-purpose' crop. They provide the villager with almost all that he needs, timber and thatch for his house, food and drink (both alcoholic and soft), oil for his lamp, fibre for mats and clothing, shells from which pots and vessels can be made. They have been cultivated, therefore, from time immemorial, before the Western demand for oil and fibre made it worth increasing the acreage to provide an export crop. In Ceylon this increase simply meant that the villagers and small planters grew more coconuts; it did not lead to the establishment of large-scale modernised plantations, as it did in the Philippines"[1]. It must also be emphasised that since coconuts are a comparatively easy crop to cultivate and to work, it was not necessary to have a large labour force on a coconut, as it was on a tea plantation. Thus it happened that some of the old land-owning class and other Ceylonese who had somehow made money - as by the practice of law - used their ancestral or their purchased lands to plant coconuts on a large scale[2].

As far as the minerals are concerned, Ceylon on the whole, was deficient. The only important mineral that was mined after 1900 on a large scale, has been the lead ore. In the early years of the present century, a considerable demand for this arose from the steel industry and this was greatly

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1. Patterson. op. cit. p.163.
2. Mendis: Ceylon Today and Yesterday. Chap.8.

stimulated by the need for munitions in the first World War. The mining of graphite, therefore, became a very profitable occupation. It was almost entirely in the hands of the Sinhalese on whose lands it was largely found. It was from this source that the Senanayakes and Sir John Kotelawala obtained their fabulous fortunes[1].

The marketing and shipping of the export crop, it must be stressed, was in the hands of the European firms all along the period under review. It is only after 1947 that a change came in the situation. Retail trade, on any large scale, was carried on mainly by Europeans and Indians[2]. The Europeans concentrated in Colombo, Kandy and Nuwara Eliya; for the rest, Indians mainly from the North and Central India were in full control of the retail trade[3]. This was particularly the case with the import and sale of textiles. Another activity of the Indians was the lending of money; some of them known as <u>chetties</u> operated on quite a large scale. In some places, the Pathans, commonly called as the Afghans, picturesque and rather terrifying men carrying out stout sticks, lent small sums at exhorbitant rates of interest and made their debtors scared and miserable when they failed to pay up in time[4]. They are a common sight even today in different parts of India.

The main consequences of the economic development of Ceylon from 1815 to 1947 may now be noted[5]. In the first

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1. Pakeman, op. cit. p.77.
2. Ibid. p.77.
3. Ibid. p.78.
4. Pakeman. op. cit. p.79.
5. Mendis. op. cit. pp.74 ff.

place, the opening of plantations led to the development of communications - the roads, the railways and the canals. The improved means of communications not only facilitated the administrative process, but also broke up the isolation of the interior village[1]. They dealt a death blow to the caste system. They led to a gradual improvement in the trade of the country both internal and foreign. The development of commerce and trade led to an improved banking system and by the beginning of the first World War, the banking of Ceylon came into the hands of such commercial banks as the Imperial Bank of India, the Chartered Bank of India, the National Bank of India, the Mercantile Bank of India, and the Hongkong and the Shanghai Bank. There were a couple of local banks, but they did not go far. Like banking, insurance was also exclusively in the hands of the Europeans. The plantations, communications and trade led to the growth of Colombo and the rise of a large number of cities in the plantation areas. These towns became the nerve centres of the country just as, in the old economy, tanks and irrigation channels were the life-giving centres. By 1906 the Colombo harbour had been completed - the largest artificial harbour in Asia - and a graving dock constructed[2]. In 1911, it was reported that the tunnel of shipping calling at Colombo had risen to over seven million giving employment to dock workers and furnishing revenue to the Government. Colombo had become one of the

1. Weerawardana. op. cit. pp.20-22.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica. 1953. Vol.5. p.181.

busiest and most important ports in the world - the Clapham Junction of the East.

The growth of trade linked the various parts of the Island with several kinds of bonds. With the establishment of the railway, the Jaffna Peninsula, which in matters of education had followed India, began to fall in line with the rest of the Island. These changes made the people think in terms of Ceylon and gradually a spirit of nationalism began to emerge[1]. But the most important consequence of the various economic developments during this period was the coming of the Indian labour. The Europeans found it profitable to exploit the resources of the country and, therefore, they helped to develop it. The Indian labourer, who in his own country had little chance of eking out an existence, found it profitable to come to Ceylon and was, in turn, followed by the Indian trader[2]. The Kandyan villagers did not, for various reasons, wish to do regular work on the newly opened coffee estates[3]. The vast reservoir of unskilled labour in the barren and over-populated districts of South India was now, therefore, tapped. It is not clear to whom the idea of drawing on this labour first occured, but they seem to have come seasonally soon after the start of the coffee plantations. The Indian labour no doubt helped to enrich the country, but it created a serious Indian problem in Ceylon, which we examine in the next chapter.

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1. Holland: Asian Nationalism And The West. Part 4. pp.349 ff.
2. Williams,H: Ceylon, Pearl of the East. pp.222 ff.
3. Soulbury Report. Chap.I. Also refer to Weerawardana. op. cit. p.31.

Finally, the rise of a genuine middle class in Ceylon was largely the result of the economic conditions created by the development of cash crops and connections with the world market. It did not really start until the last decade of the nineteenth century, when it profited from a steady expansion of education which had been going on for fifty years. Any country whose economic development followed the path of Ceylon's in the 19th century would inevitably begin to produce an urban middle class, but the peculiarity about Ceylon is that this class was Ceylonese and not Chinese or Indian, as it was in the other Buddhist countries, Burma and Siam [1]. Moreover, the degree of urbanisation among Ceylonese is higher than that of almost any other Far Eastern people - 13% in 1931 and 15.3% in 1946 [2]. This urban middle class live mostly in Colombo and its environs (361,000 population), but Jaffna, Lavinia, Kandy, Moratuwa and Galle all have populations around 50,000 today - quite a high figure for a country whose total population is only about 10 million [3]. It seems probable that the growth of this middle class was partly made possible by the fact that the Island was a more manageable size than most areas of the Far East. As a result, the impact of the Portuguese and the Dutch rule had really made an appreciable effect on the people before the British arrived, and when the British administrators set out to create

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1. Pettersen: op. cit. pp.163-164.
2. Ibid. p.164.
3. Encyclopedia Britannica. Vol.5. p.181.

roads, and the missionaries to build schools, they did not feel themselves faced with an impossible task.

§ 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDO-CEYLON ECONOMIC RELATIONS

In the light of this account we can appreciate several characteristic features of the Indo-Ceylon economic relations from 1900 to 1947. In the first place, the colonial economies of both India and Ceylon were export-oriented economies. Primary production has been largely determined by a foreign demand and hence national income fluctuates with fluctuations of demand in distant export markets. Secondly, the economy of Ceylon, as it developed after 1830, specialised in a narrow range of exports - coffee, tea, rubber and coconut. This factor has conditioned the pattern of trade with India. Many of these commodities were actually not required in India on any large scale. India, on the contrary, being a large country with far greater resources, could meet many of the requirements of Ceylon. From 1900 onwards, what we find is that Ceylon imports from India more than it could export[1]. In relation to India, therefore, Ceylon's balance of trade was always unfavourable[2]. Thirdly, the colonial economy of Ceylon depended largely on the cash crops[3]. In fact colonial economic policy is always tardy to recognise that industry has a place in the economy. Being a typical product of such a policy,

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1. Thirty Years of Trade Statistics of Ceylon (5 Parts). Part II. Colombo.
2. Ibid. Part IV.
3. Sarkar, N.K: The Demography of Ceylon. Chap.3.

Ceylon throughout this period, did not possess any manufacturing industry except for the simple processes of converting plantation crops into a marketable condition for export. It is only in very recent years (after 1947) that efforts have been made to promote industries in Ceylon. During the period 1900-1947, Ceylon remained industrially a very backward country[1]. In India, however, during and after the first World War, and particularly after the Great Depression 1929, the industrial process had been set in motion. Industrialisation as a remedy for the evils of an ill-balanced agricultural or mining economy became, paradoxically enough, an objective of colonial economic development and was backed by nationalist sentiment which reached various heights of fervour in countries of Asia during the thirties[2]. It was the Dutch who took the lead in industrialisation by establishing a number of factories producing cheap consumer goods in Java. Attempts were also made to diversify agriculture in order to ensure to the masses a subsistence diet and reduce their utter dependance on cash crops or plantation labour. More importantly, the Japanese economic penetration and export drive in India assisted the process of industrialisation[3]. Initially, the British authorities in India reacted to Japanese competition by trying to preserve the Indian market through high tarrifs and quotas. But high tarrifs and quotas stimulated the manufacture in India itself of goods in

1. Ginsburg. op. cit. pp.670-72.
2. Holland. op. cit. pp.403-412.
3. Lands and Peoples. Vol.4. Chap.2.

the protected categories. It was thus that the Japanese attempted to penetrate the Indian market materially contributed to the progress of industrialisation in this country. During the thirties of the present century, considerable industrial development was witnessed in India. It is thus clear that the progress of industrialisation in India and its absence in Ceylon materially contributed to India's favourable balance of trade in relation to Ceylon[1].

Fourthly, the colonial economies of South and South East Asia have been predominantly competitive and not complementary[2]. This character cannot, of course, be entirely attributed to colonialism; the broad similarity of natural environment makes for similarity in specialities of tropical production. If intra-regional trade had developed on the basis of more rational economic development, these economies would have shown greater diversification and complementarity of production. After all, even in the field of tropical production, there can be a wide range of diversity of production, ~~thrm~~ and of specialisation based on such diversity. But this has not happened. Both India and Ceylon have grown tea and in respect of this commodity, there has been a sharp competition between the two countries. This factor has had a bearing on Indo-Ceylon trade relations all along this period.

Finally, India's economic relations with Ceylon

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1. Gangula, B.N: India's Economic Relations With the Far Eastern And Pacific Countries In the Present Century. 1956. p.68.
2. Ibid. p.5.

upto 1947 developed on the basis of the expansion of British capitalistic enterprise in a potentially rich and under-developed colony[1]. Same has been the case with Burma. Indian labour, capital and enterprise have in fact followed in the wake of British venture, capital and skill and enterprise which laid the foundation of Ceylon's cash crops. The contiguity of Ceylon with India gave rise to an obvious kind of inter-regional trade in which Indians (in India as well as in Ceylon) participated. While the British merchants and traders were a kind of senior partners at the wholesale and the financial level, Indian merchants and traders acted as intermediaries between the former and the actual farmers or consumers. The pattern of India's economic relations with Ceylon has, therefore, been the same as that of the economic relations of India with Burma which until recently was part of British India. In the light of these factors, we can easily understand the bases of Indo-Ceylon economic relations from 1900 to 1947.

§ 4

THE PATTERN OF TRADE

As we noted in the first chapter, Ceylon is geographically divided into three marked divisions: (i) the low-country, which is the centre of the coconut industry and has some tea and rubber also; (ii) the middle country, which is primarily the rubber-producing area; and (iii) the up-country

1. East, W.G. and Moodie, A.E: The Changing World. 1956. pp.515-516.

where predominantly têa is grown[1]. These three crops constitute the back-bone of Ceylon's economy. All along this period, coconut products, rubber and tea, have accounted for more than 80% of Ceylon's national income derived from exports. The following table gives the figures of export of 3 major cash crops in 1947[2] :-

Table No.I.

Year	Tea Quantity (million lbs.)	Value (million Rs.)	Rubber Quantity (million lbs.)	Value (million Rs.)	Coconut Value (million Rs.)
1947	287	567	182	137	103

Subsidiary agricultural products are cinnamon, citronella, and cocoa. Rice, the staple food of India, has been cultivated on an area ranging between 9,12,000 and 9,18,000 acres (27.6% of the total cultivated area). The table below[3] indicates the acreage under ~~plantation~~ plantation crops in 1946 :-

Table No.2.

Crop	Acreage
Tea	533,646 acres
Rubber	574,522 "
Coconut	920,942 "
Total acreage of tea, rubber and coconut estates of over 20 acres	1,634,069 acres.

This table indicates that the largest area in 1946 was for coconut; not all coconut was for export; a sizeable

1. Spencer. op. cit. Chap.15.
2. Census of Agriculture. 1950. Colombo. Part 1-4.
3. Ibid. Part 4.

portion was used in Ceylon. Although tea occupied the smallest area of land, it employed the most people, and although coconut occupies the greatest amount of land, it has quite a small labour force. In 1947, about 80% of the tea estates were owned by either European proprietary planters or Sterling Companies or Rupee Companies[1]. After independence about 10% of the estates have been bought by Ceylon inhabitants mainly because of the insistence on the part of Ceylon Government on increasing substitution of Ceylon nationals for foreign nationals employed in the estates[2]. There has been a considerable repatriation of foreign capital in Ceylon. Recent estimates indicate that in 1939 resident individuals and companies produced 69.9% of the total income, non-residential individuals and companies earned 27%. In 1947, the corresponding percentages were 80.5 and 17.6 respectively. Meanwhile the number of non-resident individuals paying income tax decreased from 3792 to 3219, and the number of non-resident companies decreased from 598 to 585[3]. In rubber cultivation also, plantation agriculture predominated, though not to the same extent as tea cultivation. Of the total acreage of the rubber cultivation in 1946, 58% was owned by the Ceylonese, 30% by Europeans and the remaining 3% by other nationalities[4].

Plantation agriculture in Ceylon made rapid strides

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1. Papers by Visiting Economists. 1960. National Planning Council. Colombo. p.14.
2. Ibid. p.27.
3. The Ceylon Economist, Vol.II. No.2. p.131.
4. Census of Agriculture. 1950. Part 2. Rubber. p.12.

not merely on the basis of foreign capitalistic enterprise in the organisation of both production and marketing, but also on the basis of foreign estate workers. The largest single occupational group in Ceylon is that of workers from tea estates. The majority of them are immigrants or descendants of immigrants from South India. Some of them were people who came from India to marry those in Ceylon or who were related to them, or who wanted work; and some of them entered the Island illegally in search of work[1]. In 1946, there were 7,33,731 Ceylon Tamils, 7,80,589 Indian Tamils, and 35,624 Indian Moors in Ceylon out of the total population of 6,657,000 persons[2]. In other words Indians formed about 23% of the total population. But as workers in estates, they were the most predominant element. The estates in 1946 employed a total of 8,51,359 people, of whom 78.2% were Indian Tamils[3]. The rest, just under a quarter of the estate's population was composed mainly of Sinhalese, more Low Country than Kandyan. The rest were made up from all the other racial groups in Ceylon. The table below[4] gives the figures relating to the total Indian population on estates from 1924 to 1946. It indicates that the number of the Indian population has steadily increased :-

Table No. 3

1924	... 532,993
1934	... 664,322
1946 (Census Year)	... 693,000

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1. Weerawardana: Ceylon and Her Citizens. pp.39-40.
2. Encyclopedia Britannica. 1953. Vol.5. p.181.
3. Sarkar. op. cit. p.50.
4. The Problem of Surplus Population and Housing on Estates, Colombo. 1962.

We must also remember that the population of Ceylon has been constantly increasing, as is clear from the following table[1] :-

Table No. 4

Mid-year estimates of population.	Live births Number	Deaths	Immigration	Emigration Number	Migration difference(*)
4,928,122	206,888	124,884	234,538	201,053	33,485
5,009,394	205,469	113,003	303,167	231,828	71,339
5,090,666	213,308	132,334	289,758	237,670	52,088
5,171,938	198,005	135,274	255,886	261,896	(-) 6,010
5,253,210	205,106	133,708	223,152	263,000	(-) 39,848
5,326,000	199,170	117,452	183,122	214,703	(-) 31,581
5,389,000	199,370	110,649	158,222	187,059	(-) 28,837
5,419,000	209,032	114,690	136,057	194,227	(-) 58,170
5,560,000	206,512	127,069	259,803	165,269	94,534
5,608,000	192,755	204,823	161,483	169,344	(-) 7,861
5,642,000	192,060	123,039	153,905	161,870	(-) 7,965
5,725,000	216,072	124,210	188,054	178,471	9,583
5,826,000	208,389	122,299	180,839	182,202	(-) 1,363
5,916,000	212,111	128,611	130,160	155,758	(-) 25,598
5,972,000	212,980	122,738	68,233	100,228	(-) 31,995
6,044,000	219,864	113,003	73,756	99,926	(-) 26,170
6,044,000	221,064	112,044	102,470	189,336	(-) 86,866
6,161,000	248,820	131,061	193,972	197,940	(-) 3,968
6,308,000	232,827	133,985	269,815	182,124	87,691
6,516,000	238,494	142,931	333,066	225,389	107,677
6,719,000	256,686	135,937	282,925	226,135	56,790
6,903,000	271,191	98,544	232,760	210,290	22,740

(*) The minus (-) sign denotes excess emigration over immigration.

The rapid increase of population and the rising number of migrants of South Indian labour into the Island every year created a grave problem of providing larger employment opportunities for the indigenous inhabitants - a problem which tended to accentuate economic conflicts between the Indians and the Ceylonese, particularly when raw material

1. Economic and Social Development in Ceylon (A Survey). 1926-1954. Colombo.

prices showed a declining trend, as in the thirties (See Table No.6 below). There has naturally been a tendency to preserve or expand employment for the Ceylonese on the short term basis through the policy of Ceylonization, and on a long term basis through the development of agriculture, land reclamation and fostering of cottage industries and secondary industries. It was not before 1942 that the Ceylonese themselves started coming to the estates as labourers. Till that year, on the tea and rubber estates, only the Indian workers operated. The following table[1] makes this fully clear:-

Table No. 5

ar	Acreage under cultivation		No. of workers employed.			Total Indian population on estates.
	Tea	Rubber	Indians	Ceylonese	Total	
926	406,683	302,314	498,839	-		645,300
927	416,985	318,069	526,653	-		691,855
928	425,626	325,845	538,387	-		717,480
929	437,296	323,981	541,351	-		731,177
.30	444,293	318,043	543,459	-		740,863
931	446,985	257,850	497,410	-		685,527
932	441,636	-	470,156	-		664,322
933	445,463	178,583	438,415	-		618,314
34	447,594	248,477	459,822	-		650,564
35	444,193	251,023	477,386	-		679,201
936	441,441	234,333	460,392	-		665,000
37	443,090	267,342	453,141	-		664,000
38	449,366	270,679	461,042	-		677,000
39	-	-	-	-		679,000
40	-	-	-	-		683,000
41	-	-	437,300	-		681,000
42	439,556	290,937	433,800	111,415	545,215	678,000
43	446,813	305,727	440,907	120,045	560,952	673,000
44	450,805	310,221	441,491	120,167	561,658	649,000
45	451,139	310,260	447,221	120,643	567,864	647,000
46	449,495	305,030	454,914	126,255	581,169	693,000
47	450,512	297,411	457,075	128,680	585,751	721,000

1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. 1926-1954. Colombo. p.100.

Table No.6

MARKET PRICES OF PRINCIPAL EXPORT COMMODITIES, 1926-1947.

(in rupees)

YEAR	COMMODITY AND UNIT													
	Tea Per lb.	Rubber Per lb.	Copra Per candy of 5 cwt.	Coconut oil (white f.o.b.) Per ton	Coconuts fresh husked L.M.S. Per 1000 nuts	Desiccated coconut Per lb.	Bristle Fibre 3 tie. Per cwt	Mattress Fibre No.1 Per cwt.	Coir yarn Per cwt.	Cocoa-Estate No.1 (at Buyers Store) Per cwt.	Cinnamon quills Fine 1000. Per lb.	Cinnamon Chips Per candy of 5 cwt.	Citronella oil (ex sellers stores naked) Per lb.	Plumbago f.o.b. Per cwt.
1926	0.99	1.21	79.40	539.40	..	0.20	7.46	3.08	15.15	30.24	1.14	93.80	0.99	11.25
1927	0.94	0.95	76.88	491.73	..	0.19	8.37	3.67	16.75	52.52	1.35	102.77	0.77	9.80
1928	0.85	0.55	76.22	489.02	..	0.19	8.53	3.07	17.45	58.89	1.29	105.72	0.93	9.42
1929	0.81	0.52	64.47	412.33	60.07	0.16	9.01	2.23	14.34	53.46	1.15	96.86	1.06	10.70
1930	0.75	0.27	52.36	351.63	46.58	0.13	8.23	1.40	12.73	37.51	0.59	56.41	1.12	10.17
Average (1926-30)	0.87	0.70	69.87	456.82	53.33	0.17	8.32	2.69	15.28	46.52	1.10	91.11	0.97	10.27
1931	0.57	0.14	35.06	353.52	37.12	0.10	6.65	1.41	10.20	29.71	0.37	38.92	0.80	9.11
1932	0.42	0.11	42.21	283.75	44.60	0.11	7.95	1.25	8.42	27.71	0.28	26.40	0.94	8.31
1933	0.54	0.15	29.75	290.43	29.36	0.08	6.35	1.59	7.96	25.09	0.25	20.64	0.87	6.34
1934	0.66	0.31	21.98	149.98	19.42	0.06	4.71	1.75	9.69	22.99	0.29	20.64	0.55	7.15
1935	0.64	0.30	38.15	245.98	35.71	0.10	4.63	3.41	9.34	18.37	0.35	27.69	0.47	7.34
1936	0.67	0.41	48.02	288.55	43.03	0.11	4.95	2.17	8.40	33.72	0.37	33.75	0.42	3.99
1937	0.76	0.50	47.23	302.72	44.83	0.10	5.49	2.87	8.70	33.65	0.43	47.17	0.87	6.62
1938	0.70	0.37	27.74	184.22	26.54	0.06	3.06	2.29	8.97	19.33	0.40	35.16	0.73	7.41
1939	0.76	0.47	34.58	218.90	34.34	0.09	3.30	2.85	7.58	20.02	0.36	58.95	0.79	7.60
1940	0.81	0.55	32.79	225.00	36.73	0.08	2.25	2.29	6.75	22.77	0.40	62.30	0.83	11.95
1941	1.09	0.56	32.38	262.30	25.43	0.09	2.07	1.98	6.53	30.51	0.51	63.09	1.74	19.80
1942	0.80	0.67	54.16	468.70	46.64	0.19	6.54	4.78	9.39	29.18	1.02	238.11	2.56	23.46
1943	0.96	0.71	59.00	438.33	67.60	0.23	9.39	4.00	14.43	29.40	1.20	312.50	2.01	25.99
1944	1.07	0.98	65.00	477.33	72.50	0.23	15.71	6.01	21.77	37.44	1.20	312.50	2.18	23.98
1945	1.16	0.96	80.44	569.72	85.25	0.27	15.25	7.24	29.11	56.48	1.27	312.50	2.80	22.76
1946	1.23	0.93	100.00	696.75	103.54	0.45	26.73	12.90	37.86	106.37	1.47	254.93	5.18	21.79
1947	1.60	0.65	122.00	995.59	122.92	0.80	10.36	6.15	38.67	91.00	1.66	189.13	3.17	20.05
Average (1931-47)	0.85	0.52	51.20	368.85	51.50	0.19	7.96	3.84	14.34	37.28	0.70	121.41	1.88	13.74

THE PATTERN OF TRADE RELATIONS
§ 5

Let us now turn to the pattern of trade relations between the two countries from 1900 to 1947. The following table gives the figures of the total trade of Ceylon from 1926 to 1947. The position from 1900 to 1925, we have already surveyed earlier in this chapter.

Table No. 7

(Rs. Million)

Year	Imports	Exports	Total Trade	Balance of Trade.
1926	395	532	927	+ 137
1927	406	479	885	+ 73
1928	400	418	818	+ 18
1929	403	423	826	+ 20
1930	302	323	625	+ 21
Average(1926-30)	381	435	816	+ 54
1931	218	233	451	+ 15
1932	196	189	385	- 7
1933	177	200	377	+ 23
1934	217	264	481	+ 47
1935	228	253	481	+ 25
1936	214	268	482	+ 54
1937	243	332	575	+ 89
1938	236	285	521	+ 49
1939	242	328	570	+ 86
1940	283	387	670	+ 104
1941	287	424	711	+ 137
1942	296	531	827	+ 235
1943	447	570	1017	+ 123
1944	518	680	1198	+ 162
1945	621	666	1287	+ 45
1946	696	765	1461	+ 69
1947	963	889	1852	- 74
Average(1931-47)	358	427	785	+ 69

Source: Economic and Social Development. Colombo.

Unlike the staple exports of Burma, Ceylon's staple exports - tea, rubber and coconut - did not find a wide market in India. Ceylon and India had complementary economies to a much less extent than Burma and India[1]. In fact, in respect of tea, India and Ceylon have been, and are, even today, competitors. Industrial development in India between 1900 and 1947 did not reach a stage where she could need any significant import of rubber from Ceylon and was never able to offer the high prices offered by competitive consumers of rubber[2]. The growing Indian soap industry, of course, needed Ceylon's coconut oil and copra. Coconut products, however, ceased to figure in India's import from Ceylon after 1945. The reason for this has been that India developed her own sources of raw materials for her staple industries, including the soap industry and such rubber manufactures as were developed. Even otherwise, India was not sufficiently advanced industrially to consume any large quantity of the raw materials of Ceylon. Similarly, India's staple exports like raw jute, tea, oil seeds, minerals, etc. could not possibly be consumed in Ceylon, which industrially was an undeveloped agricultural economy[3]. Most of what was called industry in Ceylon was nothing more than cottage crafts[4]. In a village, one family might be producing pots, another making furniture, and the third

1. Ganguli. op. cit. p.55.
2. Ibid. p.56.
3. Jaya Wardene, N.U: Economic Development of Ceylon. India Quarterly. Vol.VIII. No.4. Oct.-Dec.1952. p.359.
4. Ibid. p.360.

making coir rope. They worked generally to supply the needs of their village and perhaps a few neighbouring villages and generally they worked under their own roof and at their own times. The only commodities for which there was a sizeable market in Ceylon were piece goods and jute manufacture and a variety of miscellaneous manufactured products.

In respect of fertilizers, capital goods for plantation agriculture and manufactured consumer goods which Ceylon needed, the bulk of the import demand of that country was met by the U.K. and other advanced industrial countries like Australia and the United States. On the whole, therefore, the total value of Ceylon's exports to India has been generally much less than the total value of India's exports to Ceylon. This will be clear from the following two tables [1], which indicate the composition and value of India's imports from Ceylon and India's exports to Ceylon :-

Table No.8

(Value of India's principal imports from Ceylon). Thousands of Rs.

modities	1909-10 to 1913-14 Average	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45
ses and flour re-exports)	12	27	25	13
and skins	3,43	6,37	4,02	1,31
(re-exports)	7,62	2,27	5,26	1,81
(re-exports)	1,36	2,32	2,04	1,06
	1,41	1,10	2,91	3,10
	45	43,00	95,15	72,94
	10	8,18	99	28
	91	2,23,84	1,19,57	1,44,33
	29,91	62,46	68,47	84,81
	7,10	51,71	2,14	77
	20,12	35,57	49,68	53,72
rts	72,53	4,37,09	3,50,48	3,64,26
Increase above 1913-14	100	602	477	502

1. See Ganguli. op. cit. p.340.

Table No.9
(Value of India's principal exports to Ceylon)
Thousands of Rs.

Commodities	1909-10 to 1913-14	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45
Animals, living	18,40	15,21	23,53	27,80
Coal and coke	43,39	29,74	13,81	7,19
Coffee	5,76	11,62	35,29	9,50
Cotton Manufactures	36,03	3,12,29	5,06,98	8,12,94
Fish (not canned)	24,39	72,74	1,50,18	2,12,71
Fodder, bran, etc.	1,78	5,15	6,61	2,44
Fruits and vegetables	13,55	77,29	76,77	1,29,21
Rice (not in husk)	4,26,72	3,59,18	56,63	32,83
Other grain and pulses	48,80	97,55	1,33,51	83,56
Jute goods	5,41	29,89	8,56	17,84
Manures	10,87	13,44	10,08	11,65
Oil cakes	38,54	61,28	14,90	41
Provisions	5,45	9,81	30,00	20,63
Raw Rubber	14,15	35	-	-
Seeds	12,21	34,70	45,47	34,06
Spies	15,31	46,61	50,61	50,62
Tea	26,90	6,31	16,53	41,18
Wood and Timber	2,32	63	70	68
Other Articles	52,37	5,56,68	2,56,74	4,23,75
Total	8,02,35	14,43,37	14,33,90	19,17,74
Percentage increase above 1909-10 to 1913-14	100	179	178	239

Another noticeable trend is the narrow range of commodities which account for the bulk of the total value of Ceylon's exports to India. Thus in 1947, arecanuts, copra and coconut oil accounted for 74% of Ceylon's domestic exports to India; other important items were unmanufactured tobacco, rubber, fresh and desiccated coconut and citronella oil. India's exports to Ceylon in 1947 were relatively more diversified, although manufactured products accounted for 50% of total exports. It must also be emphasized that till the outbreak of World War II, Ceylon's share of India's total

imports never exceeded 2%[1]. Excepting for the years of World War I, till 1931-32, Ceylon's share hardly rose above 1%. In 1942-43 it reached the peak level of 4% and then gradually declined to 3% in 1943-44 and 1.8% in 1944-45. 1942-43 was the most disastrous year of the war for the Allied nations, and inspite of the blocking of the trade routes due to enemy bombing of allied shipping in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, Ceylon's share in India's imports reached barely 4%[2].

Certain changes in the composition and relative importance of India's imports from Ceylon are discernible when we compare the situations before and after World War II.

Table No.10

PRINCIPAL IMPORTS INTO INDIA AND PERCENTAGE OF INDIA'S SHARE IN CEYLON'S TOTAL EXPORTS UNDER EACH HEAD.

Description	Percentage	
	1935	1947
Copra	75	40
Fresh coconut	37	Negligible
Arecanuts	85	80
Unmanufactured Tobacco	100	100
Skins dressed and undressed	72	29

Thus during the great economic crisis of the thirties, India's share of some of the principal exports of Ceylon was fairly high. In 1935, India absorbed 75% of Ceylon's exports of copra, 37% of her exports of fresh coconuts, 85% of arecanuts, the entire exports of

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1. Jayawardena. op. cit. pp.360-361.
2. Weerawardana. op. cit. Chap.II.

unmanufactured tobacco and as much as 72% of hides and skin[1]. In 1947, the situation had radically altered except in the case of unmanufactured tobacco (the entire exports of which were still being consumed by India)[2]. The decline in India's share can be attributed to the fact that after partition, undivided India's share was split up into Pakistan's share (44% in 1948) and India's share (40% in 1948).

As far as the trends in respect of the principal commodities are concerned, it may be stated that immediately before World War II, copra was an important item of import from Ceylon. In 1938, it represented more than 54% of Ceylon's domestic exports to India. By the end of 1947, the percentage had dropped to 25. This again might have been due to the partition. In the following years, this tendendy was further accentuated[3]. As regards fresh coconuts, India's share in Ceylon's exports was about 37% in 1935. By 1947, it had fallen down to about 3%. During the war export quotas were imposed on fresh coconuts with a view to encouraging

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1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. Colombo. 1955 Chap.3.
2. Ibid. pp.10-11.
3. From June 1948, Ceylon was free to sell her copra to the highest bidder in the rising international market, and the Commissioner of Commodity Purchase in issuing permits for exports of coconut oil and copra took care to see that copra was sold at the highest possible price. The difference between the high free market price and the contract price offered to the U.K. (under the bulk purchase agreement) was subject to a 98% duty for the benefit of the government revenue. Since India's negotiations for the purchase of oil and copra under contract failed, India had to buy copra in the free market. But free trading in copra pushed up the price from Rs.650/- per ton to Rs.1,240/-per ton in March, 1951, and consumers of Ceylonese copra in India had to pay abnormally high prices. Refer to the Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. Chap.IV.

production of the processed products namely copra and coconut oil. After the war, high international demand for fresh coconuts pushed up prices again. The exports had to be regulated in order to obtain the maximum price advantage. In this case, again, abnormally high prices reduced India's import demand[1]. In respect of arecanuts, India was the main importer in 1935; this position continued till 1947 with only a decline of 5% in India's share of Ceylon's exports of arecanuts. So far as unmanufactured tobacco is concerned, India's specialized demand continued intact throughout this period. Between 1935 and 1947, Ceylon was able to divert her exports of hides and skins to some other markets[2]. In 1935, India consumed about 74% of these items; in 1947 her place had been taken by the U.K., which consumed 69% of the total value of exports of hides and skins, as compared with India's share of 29%. In this case also, prevailing high prices in the world market have had a restrictive effect on Indian consumption.

The year 1926 was the best pre-war year as regards prices of exports[3]. The export price index number (base 1934-36 = 100) was 193. From then it began to fall gradually reaching the lowest point of 65 in 1932. Thereafter there was a gradual recovery reaching the pre-war peak of 116 in 1937. In the next year there was a recession, the index dropping to 99. With the outbreak of war, there was the

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1. Ganguli. op. cit. Chap.2.
2. Ibid. pp.340-41.
3. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. p.11.

natural upward trend, but the bulk purchase schemes kept the index from rising to levels which it would, perhaps, have reached under a free market. During the war period the index reached a maximum of 205 in 1945. The index kept up the upward trend during the next year reaching 226. In the next year, the Government put tea on the open market and enforced a high export duty on coconut products. As a consequence the index went up to 300.

A very important trend in India's import trade in relation to Ceylon during this period was a very narrow range of commodities supplied by Ceylon. In 1947, principal imports which accounted for 93% of India's total imports from Ceylon were the following :

Table No.11

Commodity	Share
Coconut oil	29.3 per cent
Copra	23.3 " "
Arecanuts	21.4 " "
Tobacco (unmanufactured)	7.5 " "
Rubber	3.5 " "
Fresh coconuts	3.3 " "
Citronella oil	2.7 " "
Desiccated coconuts	2.1 " "
	93.1 per cent (1)

It is thus clear that altogether "this was a narrow range of commodities of which only arecanut and unmanufactured tobacco catred for the specialised demand of Indian consumers, while the rest were commodities for which at prevailing high prices, the Indian demand was uncertain and comparatively unresponsive" [2] .

1. Thirty Years of Trade Statistics of Ceylon. Part II.
2. Ibid, p.30.

Earlier, in this chapter we referred to the value of principal exports from India to Ceylon (Table No.8). Two important features may here be noted. In the first place, the value of general imports to Ceylon increased sharply between 1926 and 1947[1]. The import price index number (Base 1934-38 = 100) was 194 in 1926. The trend of import prices was, in general, the same as that of export prices[2]. The first period saw high prices, the maximum being 194 in 1926. But the rate of decline of the import price index was much higher than that of the export price index[3]. It came down to 98 in 1933 and, thereafter remained fairly constant up to the outbreak of the war. The war period saw a very rapid increase in the index number which fast outstripped the export price index. The terms of trade steadily deteriorated. In 1945, at the end of the war, the import index number was 340 as against the export price index of 205. The index kept up the upward trend in the following years, reaching the maximum of 443 in 1948[4].

Secondly, it may be noted that in 1900 Ceylon's share in India's total exports was 4.6%. Till World War I, it never went below 3.1%. The average for this period of 13 years was 3.7%[5]. After 1937-38 Ceylon's share increased continuously and the increase was accelerated when South East Asia was overrun by the Japanese army. During the course of the Second World War, Ceylon's share reached the highest

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1. Studies in the Import Structure of Ceylon. Colombo. 1947. p.39.
2. Ibid. p.41.
3. Ibid. p.64.
4. Thirty Years of Trade Statistics of Ceylon. Part 4.
5. Ibid. Part 3.

percentage ever recorded since 1900, viz. 7.7% in 1942-43[1]. At this stage, Ceylon seems to have relied more on the nearest source of supply owing to the virtual blocking of the normal trade channels. The following table brings out the comparison between India's principal exports to Ceylon in 1947 and her principal exports in 1935 :

Table No.12

PRINCIPAL EXPORTS FROM INDIA TO CEYLON
(Value in Rupees)

Categories	1935	1947	Increase
1. Food, drink and tobacco.	28,306,234	48,668,716	20,362,482
2. Raw materials and articles mainly unmanufactured.	6,934,060	21,530,365	14,596,305
3. Articles mainly or wholly manufactured.	9,015,233	111,055,868	102,040,635
4. Animals not for food.	71,592	14,130	57,462
TOTAL	44,327,119	181,269,079	137,086,884

It is thus clear that in the course of 12 years (between 1935 and 1947), there was a spectacular increase in the total value of wholly or mainly manufactured exports, while this was not the case with regard to the aggregate value of India's export to Ceylon[2]. Of the total increase of Rs.136,941,960 in the value of India's exports to Ceylon, an increase of as much as Rs.102,040,635 is accounted for by the increase in the value of

1. Ibid. Part 5.
2. Papers by Visiting Economics. Colombo. p.61.

exports of India's wholly or mainly manufactured products[1]. This trend became significant after 1947.

Let us now consider the important changes in the composition of India's exports to Ceylon between 1935 and 1947[2]. The following table brings it out graphically :

Table No.13

PRINCIPAL EXPORTS AND INDIA'S PERCENTAGE SHARE IN CEYLON'S IMPORTS

Principal exports	Percentages 1935	1947
Rice	18	-
Other grains	51	-
Bran and pollard	82	-
Gingelly poonac	99	100
Goats and sheep	94	100
Butter	8	-
Chillies	95	30
Other cury stuffs	56	27
Eggs	93	98
Cured fish	65	44
Onions	99	68
Potatoes	38	-
Raw cotton	68	-
Jaggery and unrefined sugar	65	54
Tobacco products	80	99
Coal	31	89
Vegetable oils	54	93
Rubber	74	-
Manures	39	-
Tiles	78	92
Metalware	22	15
Cotton piece goods	30	49
Textile	69	32
Silk manufactures	27	43
Art silk	55	17
Jute	98	99
Gunny bags	100	84
Shoes	20	34
Chemicals	13	10
Printed books	60	57
Cinema films	39	45

1. Studies in the Import Structure of Ceylon. 1947. p.92.
2. Ibid. p.64.

While before the war, a food importing country like Ceylon used to import a fair proportion of food stuffs from India, after partition, this became impossible. India now had to import food for herself; it is, therefore, not difficult to see why in 1947 India's exports to Ceylon of rice and other foodgrains, butter and potatoes completely disappeared from the export list. As India now became short of manures and raw cotton, the export of these items was also no longer possible. Export of jaggery and unrefined sugar also stopped for various reasons. But certain other categories of subsidiary food stuffs maintained their relative importance in the Ceylonese market. India's proximity to Ceylon has always given her an export advantage over Australia in respect of perishable commodities like eggs, vegetables and fruits[1]. Upto 1947, Indian chillies could be more cheaply transported to Ceylon than from other countries, although from 1945, Thailand began to compete (in 1950 Indian chillies were totally replaced by cheaper chillies from Thailand). The decline in India's share in other curry stuffs was due to the increasing competition and high prices of Indian products. In 1946, India lost ground in cummin seed to Iran, and in garlic to China[2]. Due to a fall in price, the total value of exports of Indian turmeric also declined. In respect of onions, there was a sharp decline in India's share of Ceylon's imports from 99% in 1935 to 68% in 1947; in respect of cured fish, the

1. Sarkar. op. cit. p.85.
2. Ganguli. op. cit. Chap.3.

decline was from 65% to 44%. So far as onions are concerned, the main competition to India came from Egypt and Syria[1]. They could supply not only larger quantities but also better and cheaper stuff; in respect of cured fish, the main competitor of India was Aden, and after 1947 Pakistan. Tobacco products (Bidis) continued to be thoroughly popular among the masses of Ceylon. The main supplier of coal in Ceylon has throughout been India and even today, there is hardly any competition[2]. India's export of vegetable oil to Ceylon registered a marked increase; this is the natural outcome of the tremendous advance which oils industry have registered in India. With regard to tiles, India held monopoly throughout the period 1900-1947[3]. After 1947 important changes took place in the pattern of India's export trade, but these are beyond the purview of this dissertation. India's textiles including silk and handloom piece goods were extremely popular in Ceylon, but Japan and America offered a stiff competition after 1935[4]. However, after 1939 and 1940 the supplies from Japan and the United States stopped and India held the field. After 1946, America again entered the picture and India began to lose ground in respect of textiles[5]. After 1930, India captured the Ceylonese market in respect of boots and shoes[6]. The Bata products became quite popular in the Island and shoes from the Dayal Bagh of Agra and from the Leather Works of Kanpur flooded the Ceylonese market[7]. In 1937 a local factory

1. Ibid.
2. Studies in the Export Structure of Ceylon. p.79.
3. Ibid. p.91.
4. Trade Statistics of Ceylon. Part II.
5. Import Structure of Ceylon. p.90.
6. Ibid. p.82.
7. Ibid. p.91.

with local enterprise started the production of canvas shoes; at the same time, Japan and Malaya began to offer a stiff competition to India. Inspite of these factors, Indian exports of shoes to Ceylon registered an encouraging increase. The reason for this was that the Indian boots and shoes were the cheapest among the imported varieties. Most popular in Ceylon have been lady's fancy shows, chappals and sandals.

§ 6

Balance of Trade

We may now refer to the position of balance of trade between India and Ceylon during the period under review. Earlier, we have referred to the general imports and exports of the Island from 1900 onwards. In view of the character of trade between India and Ceylon - the narrow range of Ceylon's exports, which India could increasingly absorb, the high prices of, and the intense competitive demand for Ceylon's export staples, and the wide range of goods which India could supply in a price-market like Ceylon - India traditionally has had a fairly large favourable balance of trade in relation to Ceylon.[1] But this has been always balanced against the still larger export surplus which Ceylon has always had in relation to highly industrialised countries like the U.K. and the U.S.A. The following table[2] substantiates this inference.

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1. Jayawardena. op. cit., pp. 355-46.
2. The Reserve Bank of India Bulletin, August, 1950.

Table No. 14
INDO-CEYLON BALANCE OF TRADE
(Value in Lakhs of rupees)

Year	Exports (from India)	Imports (from Ceylon)	India's balance of trade (favourable + unfavourable -)	Ceylon's overall balance of trade
1938	513	90	+ 423	+ 493
1939	522	107	+ 415	+ 857
1940	760	151	+ 609	+ 1043
1941	1003	251	+ 752	+ 1366
1942	1374	402	+ 972	+ 2568
1943	1855	352	+ 1503	+ 1469
1944	1929	270	+ 1659	+ 1799
1945	1673	250	+ 1423	+ 741
1946	1627	355	+ 1272	+ 1626
1947	1267	347	+ 920	- 734

So far as Ceylon's overall balance of trade is concerned, there was very little change which could cause any serious concern or anxiety. The variation in the volume of imports in pre-war years was not very great. The lowest was 81 (Base 1934-1938 = 100). It reached the maximum during pre-war years in 1937, when it was 104. The lowest point reached during the war was 65 in 1942.[1] With the availability of supply, the index rose from 87 in 1946 to 108 in 1947. The fluctuations in the export volumes were also not very great in pre-war years. The lowest was 92 in 1936.[2] During the war years, the index kept up fairly high, but owing to practical difficulties in increasing agricultural production, the maximum reached during war years was only 127, which was reached in 1942 and 1946. There was a sharp drop to 118 in 1947.[3]

Table No. 14 indicates that Ceylon's overall balance of trade has been favourable all along. The peak point was

1. Ibid. p. 41.
2. Ibid. p. 47.
3. The Ceylon Economist, Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 125.

reached in 1942. Before 1937, the balance of payments in Ceylon was consistently unfavourable, although the magnitude of such unfavourable balance was never very great. According to one authority this could even be attributed to "errors and omissions"[1]. It, however, appears to be fairly unreasonable to assume that the balance of payments on current account was generally in balance before the war. With the outbreak of war two factors contributed to the accumulation of large external assets - (a) the non-availability of supplies from abroad and the consequent reduction in imports, and (b) the allied military expenditure in the country[2]. The external assets which were Rs.275.1 million at the end of 1939, reached the figure of Rs.1259.9 million by the end of 1945. There was a drop of Rs.49.6 million during the next year. But in 1947 the external assets dropped by Rs.263.0 million which represented a drop of 21.7%. This was primarily due to re-stocking. As a result of a new agreement signed on Sterling Balances between Ceylon and the United Kingdom in 1948, exchange control was extended to the Sterling area, and ceiling on values of imports was imposed. As a result of these measures the drain on the Sterling Balances was stopped. The external assets at the end of 1948, were Rs.41.7 million more than at the end of 1947[3].

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1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon. Colombo. 1926-1954. p.9.
2. Ibid. p.11.
3. In 1949, the balance again began to decline. The external assets figure which stood at Rs.989 million at the beginning of the year came down to Rs.950.8 million by the end of June. With the devaluation of the currency in 1949, however, the country's external trade position improved and Sterling Balances went up to Rs.933.7 million by the end of the year. World commodity prices reached peak levels in 1950 and 1951 at the height of the Korean war. Export prices thus

It is thus clear that Ceylon's import surplus in relation to India was more than offset by her overall export surplus, leaving a sizeable export surplus, which paid for invisible debit items in the balance of payments characteristic of a colonial economy (interest, payments for shipping, banking and insurance services, amortization on loans, earnings on capitalistic enterprise, other remittances, etc.). In 1947, relaxation of import controls, combined with the backlog of demand created an overall deficit in the balance of trade. But the situation was rectified in 1948 after Ceylon's independence.

§ 7

CONCLUSIONS

It is thus clear that the economic relations between India and Ceylon can be traced back to a hoary past. The existence of a large number of Ceylon Tamils and the introduction of the Indian labour in the Island in the middle of the 19th century led to profound cultural contacts between the two countries. The social customs and habits of the masses in Ceylon are similar to those of the people in India. This circumstance makes for very close economic contacts. India's geographical contiguity with Ceylon has given her an export advantage over other countries atleast in respect of perishable commodities like eggs and fruits. The colonial character of the economy of the two countries has been an

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appreciated, and the external assets began to grow rapidly inspite of considerable relaxation of import controls. Refer to the Papers by Visiting Economists. pp.75-76.

important factor in determining the pattern of economic relations between them. The British rulers in Ceylon did not go beyond introducing cash crops in the Island, so that in 1947, by and large, Ceylon remained industrially a very backward country. Imperialism, on the whole, did not encourage the growth of complementary economies in South East Asia. The economy of India and that of Ceylon, therefore, remained competitive. The range of commodities exchanged between them could not be very large. At least so far as Ceylon is concerned, her major exports to India were not more than half a dozen. This had the result of Ceylon's unfavourable balance of trade in relation to India. Until 1944, India's balance of trade in relation to Ceylon continued to be steadily favourable. From Ceylon's point of view, this was only off-set by her overall balance of trade which, over the years, remained favourable. Finally, world fluctuations of prices had had their impact on the economic relations between the two countries particularly because the mainstay of Ceylon's export was tea, rubber and coconut products. In 1947, both India and Ceylon had to face the problem of economic development which implied industrialization. It was quite obvious that the existing pattern of trade would tend to become out of date and that new venues must be explored. The interesting fact which emerges from this review is that the various dimensions of the problem of Indians in Ceylon did not adversely affect the economic relations between the two countries. There was increasing realisation in the Island that at least some of its economic problems were not so much

the creation of the Indian minority as it was the outcome of multiplying population and of unbalanced economic development in the Island.

The estimated mid-year population in 1926 was 4,928,000. In the period 1926-30, the population increased at the average annual rate of 1.61% per annum. The average birth rate was 40.4 per thousand and death rate 25.1 per thousand. The average population during the period was 5,091,000. In the next period from 1931-1947 the population passed through a period of many eventful phases. The first major event was the malaria epidemic in 1935 which pushed up the death rate to 36.6 per thousand, the highest during the full period under consideration. As a consequence, the birth rate dropped to 34.0 in the next year, the lowest on record. The other major event was the phenomenal drop in the death rate from 20.2 in 1946 to 14.3 in 1947. This was partly due to the eradication of malaria and other insect-borne diseases by the use of D.D.T. and partly due to the general improvement in the standard of living of the masses. Except for 1934 during the early part of this period, emigration generally exceeded immigration and reflected mainly the movement of Indian labour between India and Ceylon. Thus in 1942, there was a general exodus of Indian labour following the Japanese raid. The net outflow during this period was 86,866. However, most of them started to return by 1944 and since then to the end of 1947 there was an appreciable excess of immigrants over emigrants. In 1947, it was estimated that the annual increase in the population of Ceylon was about 2½ lakhs - a rate of increase of about 3% per annum, one of the highest in the

world. Since the occupied population was about 40% of the total, a rate of increase of 3% per year must eventually lead to an expansion of the work force by something like 92,000 workers every year. The problem of providing opportunities for efficient production for an expanding work force of this size, difficult as it was, was rendered more difficult and complex by the presence of a level of unemployment and under-employment, specially in the rural sector.

It is also necessary to remember that the total surface area of Ceylon (about 16½ million acres) was not evenly developed. Its population and land resources are even today unevenly distributed. In 1947, about two-thirds of the people lived in the wet zone, which contained less than one half of the total cultivable land. The remaining one-third occupied the so-called dry zone, where the extent of cultivable land was reckoned at 3½ million acres. With even economic development in the Island, the pattern of economic relations between India and Ceylon could be more satisfactory. Finally, it may be added that during the period 1900-1947 there was no possibility of any large-scale investment of Indian capital in Ceylon. This was a sphere reserved for Britain.

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEM OF INDIANS IN CEYLON

§ 1

THE OPENING OF PLANTATIONS AND THE COMING OF INDIAN LABOUR

In the last chapter we have described in detail the process of economic development in Ceylon and the opening of plantations there. The opening of plantations was the greatest single cause of the economic change in the Island in as much as it led to commercial agriculture. Before Ceylon came wholly under the control of the British, many of the present estate lands, specially the tea land in the Central Province were "chenas" and forests, which were considered essential for the well-being of the villages. The "chenas" were a means of utilising less suitable land for cultivation[1]. In 1840, the Crown Lands Ordinance was enforced, under which all forests, waste, unoccupied or uncultivated was presumed to be the property of the Crown until the contrary was proved. In other words, unless the villager could prove that the "chenas" and forests were legally his, they belonged to the Government. Since most of the people were illiterate, they could not prove their legal title to the "chena" land and to the forests[2]. Much of the land, therefore, passed under the control of the government which sold most of it to the British planters[3]. The situation

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1. Reynolds, J.B: Regional Geography. Asia. London. pp.110-111.
2. Williams Harry: Ceylon. Pearl of the East. pp.299-300.
3. Ibid. p.300.

became more grave in course of time. In 1897, the Waste Lands Ordinance laid down that whenever it appeared to the Government Agent of the District that any land situated within his province or district, was forest, "chena", waste, or unoccupied, he could, by issue of a notice, compel any claimant to appear before him and prove his title, failing which, the land in question would be appropriated to the Crown. These steps taken by the British Government in Ceylon led to two consequences: (a) considerable amount of land became plantation land, growing tea and rubber; (b) a number of villagers held less land than formerly through loss of "chena" and forest and they had now no opportunity of increasing their holdings of land, if their numbers increased, as it was bound to happen[1].

As plantations developed, many villagers in the up-country became landless, or were left with little land on which they could hardly grow enough to meet their requirements. They would, therefore, be forced either to get into debt, or live by selling the little land which they still held[2]. If a villager got deeply into debt, he had, in any case, no alternative but to sell his land to get out of debt. In either case, many of the villagers were forced by circumstances to sell all or most of their land. The situation was aggravated by the customary law in Ceylon under which a dead person's property would be divided equally amongst his successors[3]. So long as the population did not grow fast and

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1. Silva: Ceylon under the British Occupation. Vol.I. Chap.VIII.
2. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon. Chap.3.
3. Ibid.

there was enough land for everyone, no great damage was done. But when the amount of land available to the villagers became static or even less than before, the growing population had smaller and smaller lots of land as time passed by. The villagers of the succeeding generations, therefore, had even less land than their predecessors and were more liable to get into debt and sell their land. That is how the plantations were responsible for creating landless villagers in the up-country districts; the increasing population and the law of inheritance contributed to a similar process in other parts of the Island where there were no plantations. Plantations, however, created new ways of earning a living. People were now needed to build roads in order to transport the crops from the plantations to the ports; workers were needed to cultivate the new crops, and tea specially required the careful and constant attention[1]. When the tea plantations came into being, the Kandyan Sinhalese were unwilling to work on them. They preferred whenever possible to cultivate for themselves. The Kandyans had been used to a fairly comfortable life without too much hard work, cultivating land of their own. Now they were asked to do a different kind of work which they did not like on the plantations of other men for low wages and with little leisure[2]. They tried to live, as far as possible, the life they had always led with all their old customs and traditional independence. The tea planters, therefore, had to face the most important problem of finding

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1. Ludowyk, E.F.C: Story of Ceylon. Chap.5.
2. Lord Holden: Ceylon. pp.36-50.

the necessary amount of labour to open up the resources of the Island. The abolition of slavery in Britain in 1834 and in France in 1849 had ruled out a possible source of labour.[1] The Chinese labour was considered as uneconomic - there was the problem of long distances and also a large amount of food which a Chinese consumed. The following extract from a despatch brings out this point clearly:-

> "Mr. Johnson, the Secretary in the Foreign Department at Hong Kong who possessed a perfect knowledge of Ceylon as well as of the Chinese labourers, did not hesitate to say that two of the latter required as much food to keep them as three 'malabars' and that a Chinaman must have certain luxuries of which the 'malabar' deprived himself, if he was to be kept contented and in good working conditions. Moreover, he must be brought here either at the expense of his master or of the Government in the first instance. It is evident that he would be a more expensive labourer than the 'malabar' even granting that he would perform a greater quantity of work. The 'malabar' would come over here of his own free will during the season when his labour was not in demand and would return to his own country, carrying his savings with him, as soon as the demand for his services ceases, or the longing for home called him back to his native village. Mr. Johnson laid great stress upon the absolute hopelessness of any attempt to induce the wives and families of Chinamen, to accompany them into foreign lands or to follow their fortunes afterwards, even when their success had been thoroughly established."[2]

The British enterprise, therefore, did not succeed in inducing either the African slaves, or the Chinese to come to Ceylon.[3] Near at hand, there was a vast reservoir of unskilled labour in the barren and over-populated districts of South India, where life was very hard and the level of subsistance low.[4] *

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1. Ludowyk, op. cit., p. 70.
2. Torrington's Despatch to Secretary of State for Colonies, No. 155 Miscellaneous dated Colombo, November 12, 1847. National Archieves of Ceylon, Nuwara Eliya.
3. Ludowyk. op. cit., p. 79.
4. Waiz, S.A.: Indians Abroad, Chapter 2.

A regular supply of labour from there became a matter of vital concern for the British planters. As the Ceylon Governor wrote to the Secretary of State for Colonies:

> "The great object of the colonial Government should be to create a permanent and indigenous supply of labour within the Island and if this was not to be effected by stimulating the inert and contented Chingalese (Sic) another expedient is still open by holding out such encouragement as may induce the Indian labourers to settle permanently in Ceylon."1

The importance of the Indian labour was brought out in the same Despatch as follows:

> "In looking to the prospects and future advancement of the colonies, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that the extensive operations now in progress, the large investment of capital, the resort of settlers and the application of European energy to convert the forest of the interior into productive plantations, are all dependent on a steady supply of labour; they have been undertaken on that expectation and their success or defeat must be contingent on its realisation."2

It was in these circumstances that the Indian labour was introduced in Ceylon, first on the coffee plantations and then for tea. In those days the conditions of the Tamil coolies (as they were then called) was highly unsatisfactory. To quote Duboy a French missionary:

> "In order to obtain a true idea of their abject misery, one must live among them, as I have been obliged to do. They live in hopeless poverty, and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They go about almost naked, or at best clothed in rags. They live from hand to mouth the whole year round, and rarely know one day how they will procure food for the next. When they happen to have any money, they invariably spend it at once, and make a point of doing no work as long as they have anything left to live on."3

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1. Emerson Tennent's Despatch to Secretary of State for Colonies. No. 6 Miscellaneous, Colombo, April 21, 1847. National Archieves of Ceylon, Nuwara Eliya.
2. Ibid. It seems the British wanted to create Belts for colonising Europeans in Asia as they had attempted colonization of the Himalayas also. See Higson, B.H., Colonization of the Himalayas, No. XXVII, p. I, Calcutta, 1857.
3. Williams Harry: Ceylon, Pearl of the East, p. 225.

The worst feature was, of course, the journey from India to the up-country. Mr. Pakeman in his monograph has thus described it:

"The labourers were brought down in gangs by a leader known as a kangany. After crossing the narrow Palk Strait, they had to make their way on foot through the waste lands of the North-Central Province (as it is now); and on that long trek many of them died. Later on they were brought to the port of Mannar on the west coast by sea; but this constituted a serious danger to the health of the colony, as cholera and smallpox were endemic in the parts from which they came, and even bubonic plague was a fell disease they might bring with them. After some time, largely on the initiative of the Planters' Association, quarantine camps were established, with medical facilities. Eventually a well organised centre, known as the Coast Agency of the Ceylon Labour Commission, was established at Mandapam in South India, through which all immigrant labourers and their families had to pass. This was paid for by contributions from the estates, and was under the supervision of the Planters' Association, with the co-operation of the Governments both of Ceylon and of Madras.

The labourers lived in 'coolie lines' on the estates, which consisted of long, low, one-storey buildings, with a number of small rooms, usually ten, and usually one family to a room. Some of these lines were unhealthy and insanitary, though probably an improvement on the conditions under which the labourers lived in their home lands. They were paid regular wages and were issued with a free weekly supply of rice. On the whole, planters did their best to look after their labour force, and in one way and another their welfare was improved - medical facilities were made available better lines built, and eventually estate schools set up for the children. These improvements were due partly to the growth of interest and the taking of action by the Governments of India and of Ceylon, and partly to the efforts of the Planters' Association. It is, of course, not surprising that the conditions of Tamil coolie labour in the last century stirred up no particular feelings of indignation; free enterprise and *laissez faire* were the economic shibboleths of the period and applied just as much to the factory worker in Britain or India as they did to the estate worker in Ceylon, or elsewhere."[1]

§ 2

The Kangany System and the Tundu

A characteristic feature of the conditions of life of these

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1. Ceylon, p. 79-80.

labourers was the so-called Kangany system.[1] The journey from India to Ceylon plantations could not be undertaken without money and the immigrant labourers could never afford the cost. The usual method was for the cost to be met by the recruiter,- the Kangany, usually from a fund furnished by his employer; a little cash might be advanced to the immigrant, and, according to the immemorial custom of the East, the Kangany got his rake-off, probably from the immigrant as well as from the planter. The cost was debited to the immigrant and had to be paid off gradually from his wages. He was given a chit (piece of paper), known as "Tundu", stating his indebtedness, and was not allowed to leave the estate until the debt stated on the tundu was discharged.[2] Debts would often be increased by advances of pay made for marriages and other festive occuasions, so that the unfortunate labourer whose tundu showed a large load of debt was virtually tied to the estate. This practice was abolished in 1921 on the initiative of the Planters' Association.[3] It cost the industry about £ 4 million sterling; but there is no doubt that this greatly improved the relations between the employers and their labourers. The system of recruitment was thus described by the Ceylon Labour Commission of 1908:

> "This system is ..... of a purely patriarchal character, in its origin and principles. The Kangani, or the labour Headman, was in the beginning, and still is, in a large number of the older and more solidly established estates, the senior member of his family group composed of his personal relations, to whom may be added other families drawn from villages in Southern India from the vicinity of which he and his relations also come. The labour force thus

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1. Gupta, B.L.: Political and Civic Status of Indians in Ceylon, pp. 12-13.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Pakeman: Ceylon, p. 80.

> formed is subdivided into a number of smaller - groups, each under its patriarch, the sub or silara Kangani; and the family principle is further manifested in the groups which are under the minor Headman, a man with his wife and children, and it may be one or more close relations assuming joint responsibility for advances made to them and holding their earnings in some sort in common."[1]

During the period 1837-1904, there was no control on the activities of the Kangani either from the Government of India or of Ceylon. He was sent by the employer with the requisite funds to recruit workers from South India; and he often used unfair means and misappropriated the money by saving it in most crooked ways.[2] Instead of giving them any conveynance, he made them march on foot and by the time that they reached the port, they were completely exhausted; some of them even died in the process.[3] In 1904, the planters set up the Coast Agency with a view to financing and supervising recruitment. Meanwhile the pressure of public opinion was mounting up in India. As early as 1839, the Government of India had prohibited emigration. This step was most unwelcome to the Government of Ceylon, who wanted a regular and steady supply of labour for coffee plantations. Negotiations began between the two governments and on the initiative of the Government of India, Ceylon passed an ordinance in 1847, prohibiting Indians in Ceylon from entering into contracts for service in other countries. In 1847, therefore, India lifted the ban on immigration to Ceylon on the plea "that the Island of Ceylon, geographically and socially considered, was analogous to the countries subject to the East India Company."[4]

1. Quoted by Dr. Lanka Sundram: Indian Overseas, p. 22.
2. Ferguson, J.: Ceylon in 1893, p. 79.
3. Capper, John: Old Ceylon Sketches, p. 52.
4. Report of the Controller of Indian Immigrant Labour, 1929, Para 63.

Early in the twentieth century, the notorious Kangani system and the tundu roused the conscience of the public and in 1916, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya introduced a motion in the Central Legislature in regard to the abolition of the indentured system of recruitment.[1] Lord Hardinge, then Viceroy of India, made a historic announcement of his Government's intention to abolish all emigration of indentured labour. In 1917, under the pressure of public opinion, the Government of India sent messrs N.E. Marjoribanks and A.K.G. Ahmed Tambi Markkayar to Ceylon to report on the conditions of the Indians in the Island. The report of these persons clearly brought out the worst features of the Kangani system.

It was stated in this report that the Head Kangani practically controlled all the domestic affairs of his gang of labourers, comprising about 25 or 30 persons. He settled the disputes and dealt with all minor complaints and grievances; he was an intermediary between the Estate Superintendent and the labourer in all financial affairs excepting the payment of his wages.[2] With the boom in tea cultivation, every tea planter was extremely keen to get cheap and efficient labour.[3] Large advances were made to the Kangani for this purpose, but by common consent, the bulk of the share passed into the pocket of the Kangani himself. The Kangani and the tundu only meant a chronic indebtedness and conditions of slavery for the labourer. As we stated earlier, the travelling expenses of the recruit from his home in South India

1. Assembly Debates, Volume I, 1916.
2. Marjoribanks and Marakkayar: Report on Indian labour emigrating to Ceylon and Malaya, p. 5.
3. Bassett, R.H.: Romantic Ceylon, Chapter 4.

to the Estate in Ceylon were advanced to him by the Kangani.[1] This debt was subsequently enhanced by further loans for marriage, festive occasions and credit purchases. This amounted to a staggering figure, which it was impossible for the labourer to repay. Non-payment of the debt placed him under a terrible servitude. He was tied down to the Estate, and could never leave it until the debt was redeemed.[2] The Kangani could transfer him from estate to estate by obtaining from the employer a document, the tundu, stating that he was prepared to discharge his workers on payment of their liabilities to him (the amount of which was duly noted in the tundu). If the tundu was accepted by any other employer, the group of workers was transferred to him.[3] It was virtually slavery. Marjoribanks and Marakkayar have thus described the process:

> "If the debt due (through the Kangany) to an estate by each labourer of a gang of, say, 20 averaged Rs 30, the Kangany might ask for Rs 10 more per head. If he got it, the debt against each labourer would be Rs 10, more in the book of the estate, though the extra Rs 10, might not all, or any of it, reach the labourer. If the Kangany was refused further advance, he would demand and get his tundu for himself and the twenty labourers, the total debt being put down at Rs 600 and he would hawk this round till he got a superintendent to give him, say, Rs 750. Of this, Rs 600 would go to the Superintendent of the first estate who would thereupon discharge the Kangany and his gang of 20 labourers, and the balance of Rs 150, would be taken by the Kangany ostensibly to give to the labourers; but, whether it reached them or no, their debt in the books of the new estate would now average Rs 37/8/- (Rs 750 ÷ 20)."[4]

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1. Pakeman, op. cit., p. 80.
2. Bell, H.C.P. Report on the Kegalla District, Para 29.
3. Farmer : Pioneer Cultivation in Ceylon, Chapter 5.
4. Marjoribanks and Marakkayar Report, Para 18.

§ 3

The Tin-Ticket System

Now, in order to check the evils, emanating from such practices, the Government of Ceylon introduced the so-called Tin-Ticket System.[1] These tickets were little pieces of tin punched with a letter and two numbers. The letter denoted the districts; the first number was the number of the estate; and the second number was a serial to denote the particular labourer for whom it was used.[2] These tickets were made available at any government office and could be bought by an Estate Superintendent at Rs 2.50 per hundred. The Superintendent would give them to his recruiting Kangany or could send them to the Ceylon Labour Commissioner at Trichinopoly. They used to give one to each labourer, proceeding to a particular estate and on arrival of the labourer, at the Ceylon Government Quarantine Camp, the labourer presented his ticket to the Camp Superintendent.[3] He was thereupon entered in a register and after that the Kangany had not to make any further payment on account of either food or travelling expenses from the camp to the estate. All these charges were borne by the Ceylon Government, which could recover them from the estates concerned.[4] Conditions, however, could not improve very appreciably, and the Kangany could always do mischief and make money through various loopholes.[5] The efforts of the Indian people, therefore, continued and they pressed the Indian Government to define clearly the objectives of their policy in

1. Gupta, op. cit., p. 15.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Vajayatunga: The Isle of Ceylon, p. X.
5. Pakeman: Ceylon, p. 79.

regard to emigration of Indian labourers to foreign countries.

§ 4

The Emigration Act, 1922

It was in these circumstances that the Indian Legislature passed the Emigration Act of 1922, which laid down in clear language the status of Indians going as labour to foreign countries. Sir B.N. Sharma, member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, while introducing the bill stated:

> "We were asked to send labourers to Fiji, British Guiana and other places; we stipulated that we could not contemplate such measures unless and until the Government concerned issued ordinances which distinctly proclaimed the perfect equality of status of Indians with the other classes of His Majesty's subjects in these countries. To that policy, the Government of India adhere now and propose to adhere tomorrow and it is because they follow that policy, they readily and willingly sought the co-operation of the legislature and have introduced the Bill."[1]

Thus, the emigration of the Indians was permitted by the enactment of 1922 on the express condition of perfect equality of Indian population with the rest of the population of Ceylon.[2] The emigration of the Indians continued during the next decade and it was only in the thirties that the Ceylon Government in the wake of the nationalist movement and the adverse effects of the economic depression began to look upon the emigration of the Indians with fear and apprehension. The mounting unemployment in Ceylon was attributed to the presence of the Indian population.[3] A non-official resolution was introduced in the State Council formed under the Donoughmore Constitution, asking the Government to take immediate steps to provide employment to the

1. Indian Assembly Debates, 1922, p. 231.
2. Lanka Sundaram, India in World Politics, Chapter 2.
3. Jayawardene: Economic Development of Ceylon, India Quarterly, Vol. VIII, No. 4.

Sinhalese. The Minister for Labour and Commerce in Ceylon appointed an informal Committee to report on the unemployment problem in the Island. The suggestions made by the Committee included settlement of the unemployed on the land, reform of the existing educational system, and employment of Sinhalese labour on the estates.[1] The problem, however, continued to be difficult. In March, 1939, Sir John Kotelawala suggested "that all daily paid non-Ceylonese workers in Government Departments should be repatriated to the country of their birth with a gratuity and their fares paid; and that stringent regulations should be enforced to prevent their return to Ceylon for employment here."[2] In pursuance of this suggestion, the Ceylon Government decided to retire compulsorily all the non-Ceylonese daily paid workers. As the Sessional Paper put it:

> "It was required that all non-Ceylonese daily-paid workers who had been granted Government employment or re-employment after a non-condonable break on or after April 1, 1934 should be given one month's notice from July 1, 1939, of the termination of their services under Government, i.e., their last working day was July 31, 1939."[3]

§ 5

Nehru's Visit: 1939

Now, at this time, there were about six thousand non-Ceylonese daily-paid workers in Government Departments. The Indians in Ceylon described this scheme as monstrous; the Government of India viewed this step as a gross violation on the part of the Ceylon Government of all the previous undertakings given to India. This led to strained relations between India and Ceylon.[4]

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1. Sessional Paper VII, 1937. Colombo.
2. An Asian Prime Minister's Story, p. 98.
3. Sessional Paper XVIII, 1940. Colombo.
4. Rao, P.R.R.: India and Ceylon, p. 61.

Public clamour demanded some strong action and the Government of India, after some hesitation, imposed a ban on the emigration of unskilled labourers to Ceylon.[1] Popular agitation in India forced the All India Congress Working Committee to send Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru to the Island in order to study the conditions. To this visit, we have referred earlier also. Sir John refers to the discussions he had with Mr. Nehru on the question of Indians in the following terms;

> "During the talks we had with him I justified the action which I had initiated, and rebutted the charge that this was a movement of unfair discrimination against Indians in Ceylon. I told him that the problem of unemployment among Ceylonese was becoming so serious that it was even feared that the Government might soon have to pay doles unless other methods of relieving the situation could be found. I impressed on him that the men who were being sent away had been told that, in view of the increasing financial stringency, retrenchment of daily-paid jobs within the next year or two was inevitable, and that the policy of discontinuing non-Ceylonese before Ceylonese would have then to be adopted. Meeting the general charges of anti-Indian feeling brought against the people of Ceylon on public platforms and in the Indian Press, I referred to Indian moneylenders who duped illiterate debtors; to Indian shops in Colombo with 100 per cent Indian staffs; and to professional politicians from India who attempted to engineer strikes among ignorant Indians. I also mentioned that Indian members of the State Council often voted against Ceylonese interests, violating the fundamental principles of the Indian National Congress. Much misunderstanding in India and mischievous misrepresentation by Indians in Ceylon aggravated the Indo-Ceylon problem, and fruitless discussions continued for many years with increasing bitterness on both sides."[2]

§ 6

The Indian Problem During the Second World War

Mr. Nehru's visit, as we stated earlier, led to the founding of the Ceylon Indian Congress, which, in coming years, became the main spokesman of the Indian residents in Ceylon. By 1947, its

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1. Sundaram, Lanka; Indians Overseas, Chapter 2.
2. op. cit., pp. 98-99.

membership embraced all the states where Indians worked and it had organised a network of Trade Unions for the benefit of workers. With the coming of the Second World War and the mounting fears of Japanese advance, and also as a reaction to the harsh policies followed by the Government of Ceylon, there began almost an exodus of Indian workers from Ceylon to India. But as the war took a favourable turn and the victory of the Allied was in sight, most of the labourers who had left the Island returned.[1] In 1945, the question not only remained unsolved, but was assuming more and more alarming proportions.[2] Most Sinhalese leaders viewed the question as a matter of life and death. Speaking in 1940, Sir John said that "If Indians swamped us, it would destroy our identity as nationals of Ceylon. All we wanted was to have the same rights that other countries enjoyed - namely to decide who the citizens of our country should be. We had the misfortune of seeing most of our lands taken over by foreign capitalists for the sake of making money at our expense. Without our consent, they imported Indian labourers. My contention was that it was impossible to make 900,000 Indians citizens of Ceylon without the risk of reducing our own people to beggary and losing our identity as Ceylonese."[3]

Earlier, we referred to the ban which the Government of India had placed on the emigration of all unskilled labour from India to Ceylon. This was on August 1, 1931. An exception had been made only in respect of the families and dependants in India of labourers in the Island. This ban remained in force ever since its

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1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon, p. 3.
2. India Quarterly, Vol. III, No. 1, p. 54.
3. op. cit., p. 99.

imposition except to the extent that it was relaxed in 1942 so as to permit the return to Ceylon of Indian labourers (then in the Island) who might go to India on or after 1st September 1942. The object of this relaxation, which was made by India after consultation with, but without the concurrence of Ceylon was to enable labour then in Ceylon, to pay its customary visit to India for social and domestic reasons.[1] In November, 1940, a conference was held in Delhi between representatives of the two Governments to settle outstanding differences in connection with the franchise, domicile and status of Indians in Ceylon, the control of emigration to the Island and other cognate matters, as a preliminary to the examination of trade relations between the two countries.[2] This conference proved abortive.[3] It broke down on the question of the status of Indian immigrants then in Ceylon. A period of considerable tension followed during which an Immigration Bill published in Ceylon in February, 1941, was given its second reading in the State Council at the end of March, and referred to a Standing Committee, where it remained for long.[4] The Bill made no further progress in 1941 for two reasons: (a) The ban imposed by the Government of India prevented the immigration of unskilled labour from presenting an immediate political problem to the Government of Ceylon; (b) An effort was being made to arrange another conference with the Government of India.

At the second conference, which took place in Colombo in September, 1941, the two delegations reached agreement on all

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1. Soulbury Report, pp. 60-61.
2. Ibid., p. 61.
3. Ibid., p. 62.
4. Cmd. 6677, Chapter XI.

points, including, interalia, the Immigration Bill and the questions of franchise, Government employment and re-entry.[1] Their Joint Report was signed on 21st September, 1941.[2] In December that year, war spread to the Far East and South East Asia. At that time the Government of India had not communicated to the Government of Ceylon their decision as to the ratification of the agreement entered into by their delegates - they were not plenipotentiaries - but in February 1942, the Government of India asked the Government of Ceylon to agree to postpone negotiations until the war was over.[3] According to the Government of India, that involved for the period of the war the maintenance of the status quo as before the introduction of the Immigration Bill in Ceylon, the Government of India earnestly trusted "that the Government of Ceylon would agree that was the proper course to pursue in the best interest of the successful prosecution of the war."[4] The Government of Ceylon agreed to postponement until conditions favourable to the resumption of negotiations should return. Subsequently, in February 1943, the Government of India informed the Government of Ceylon that they had, in effect, decided to refuse to ratify the agreement entered into by their delegates. The situation did not materially alter since that date. The ban on the immigration of unskilled labour from India remained in force.[5]

The problems of Indians in Ceylon, on the one hand, had a bearing on the trade and economic relations between the two

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1. Ibid., Para 229.
2. Sessional Paper XXVIII, 1941. Colombo.
3. Ibid., p. 32.
4. Sessional Paper III of 1943.
5. Soulbury Report, p. 61.

countries; and, on the other, it had its effects on the constitutional reforms in the Island. An example of the former can be cited from the developments in 1941.[1] The old trade agreement between the two countries was due for renewal in January 1941; this was hindered by the dispute regarding the status of Indians in Ceylon and the action of the Ceylon Government in replacing two thousand Indian born workers by Sinhalese.[2] The conference of September - October, 1941, to which we referred above failed to secure any agreement so far as the trade agreement was concerned. Other matters were, of course, settled temporarily. In March 1941, two Bills were introduced in the State Council of Ceylon for the control of immigration and the registration of non-Sinhalese. Under the first, immigration was to be of two types: (a) permits for indefinite stay for persons of independent means with a capital of Rs 10,000, members of the liberal professions with Rs 5,000, persons of religious occupation and students whose cost of education is assured; (b) permits for definite periods issued only to persons with prospects of employment. The second Bill required non-Ceylonese adults of both sexes to register within a month with the authorities. Stiff opposition was offered to these bills by the representatives of the Indian community.[3]

During the continuance of war with Japan, further consideration of the question was postponed. But in 1943, the Government of India conceded that "Ceylon has the right to determine the future composition of her population by the imposition of such

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1. Keesing's Contemporary Archieves, Jan. 4-11, 1941, p. 4399.
2. Ibid., p. 4400.
3. Ibid., May 17-24, 1941, p. 4620.

restrictions as she may deem necessary upon the entry of new comers."[1] Now, on the one hand, the British planters in Ceylon imported the cheap Indian labour with a view to exploiting the natural resources of the Island; they did not make use of the Sinhalese labour by offering positive inducement.[2] On the other, they did not create healthy conditions for the Indian labour, and created conditions in which the relations between the Indian population and the Ceylonese would never be cordial.[3] Again, while the British Government in India conceded to Ceylon the right to determine the future composition of her population, the British authorities did not empower the Government of Ceylon to prohibit or restrict the re-entry of persons, normally resident in the Island.[4] At the same time, the Soulbury Commission conceded that the rights and privileges of citizenship could be regulated and defined by the Government of Ceylon without regard to any undertaking which they had given to India.[5] In all these ways, the question became thoroughly complicated and in this process the Imperialist Government in India and Ceylon played a major role.[6] This aspect has been graphically brought out by Sir John in his memoirs in the following terms:

> "The Indo-Ceylon problem is largely a legacy of the old colonialism. It started with the opening of plantations or estates in the territory of the former Kandyan Kings by British capitalists some 125 years ago. The local population, which was Sinhalese by race and language and Buddhist by religion, occupied and owned the paddy lands in the

1. Sessional Paper III. 1943. Colombo.
2. Cmd. 6677. Chapter XI.
3. Ibid., p. 62.
4. Rose, S.: Politics In Southern Asia, Chapter 4.
5. Cmd. 6677, p. 64.
6. Pavlov, V. I. India, Economic Freedom Versus Imperialism, p. 22.

valleys of this territory while it used the hills, which were covered with jungle or patna (thick grass land on the mountain tops) for the pasturing of cattle, the collection of firewood and timber, and the cultivation of chenas (land that is periodically cultivated). The British treated these unoccupied hills as Crown lands, and disposed of them at nominal rates to capitalists who were prepared to cultivate coffee and - after the failure of coffee - tea and rubber.

Labour was imported from South India and housed on the estates. It was imported by foreign capitalists, with the assistance of the foreign Government then in power. It was accorded special privileges, some of them by statute, and Indian labourers were given facilities of travelling up and down between Ceylon and their homes in India. In course of time the Sinhalese population in the Kandyan villages multiplied without having room for expansion, for it was pénned into its narrow valleys by the estates.

Thus one finds to-day in the valleys, cultivating their ancestral lands, the Kandyans, who observe their ancient traditions, while on the hill-sides between those valleys is a migrant population of South Indian wage-earners, who observe the social traditions of South India. These two sections of the population do not mix, for they are different in religion, language, social tradition, and occupation. In most countries a migrant population can be absorbed into the indigenous population in one generation. In Ceylon it is still 'Indian' after three generations.

The term 'migrant' is, however, used in three senses. In the first place, the population has been imported within the last hundred years. In the second place, a large part of that population is still domiciled in South India. Many of the families in Ceylon maintained contact with their relatives in India and visit their ancestral villages every year. Even families which have been long resident in Ceylon maintain contact with India, so that, for instance, the young man marry wives from within the appropriate social groups in India. In the third place, the population is migrant in that it is not attached to the soil, but moves about from estate to estate as employment offers. For this reason even the identification of an Indian migrant is often a matter of considerable difficulty.

Within the same province, the same district, and even the same village area there are thus two distinct communities, unable to speak each other's language, having no social or economic relations with each other, and having in fact nothing in common save geographical propinquity. This is the picture so far as the Indian population resident on the estates is concerned. This population constitutes by far the largest proportion of the Indian population in Ceylon, but outside the estate areas, and more especially in the towns, there is a not inconsiderable section of

> Indians who are just as migrant as the others, and whose presence is of not less significance to economic conditions where Ceylon's own nationals are concerned."[1]

Thus, the complaint of the Ceylonese mainly has been that the Indian labour in the Island was brought by the foreigners to serve their own selfish interest.[2] In spinning out this argument, they forget that the major reconstruction of Ceylon has been brought about by the Indian labour.[3] The construction of railways and the net-work of roads for the transportation of agricultural produce from the interior of the Island to the ports was entirely their creation.[4] The clearance of vast jungles of Ceylon, and the swamps with which the country was studded, and the attendant benefits were all due to the energy of the Indian labourers.[5] Whatever the complications created by the British rulers, it is difficult to understand the reasoning put forward by the late Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, a member of the Ceylonese delegation which visited New Delhi in 1940 for the Exploratory Conference. He argued:

> "I am refuting the idea that these labourers were originally brought over, or came over, particularly for our benefit; the idea that they have converted the wilderness of Ceylon into a paradise, as a certain gentleman representing the Ceylon Indian Congress Delegation has stated here. That was not the case. They did not come without will or desire. They were brought over not merely for economic reasons but partly for political reasons - from the point of view of the British Government".[6]

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2. Poplai, S.L.: Select Documents on Asian Affairs, India, 1947-50, Vol. II. External Affairs, pp. 107 ff.
1. An Asian Prime Minister's Story, pp. 101-102.
3. Ibid. pp. 97 ff.
4. Ibid., p. 98.
5. The World To-day, Vol. IX, No. 10, pp. 430-431.
6. Indo-Ceylon Relations Exploratory Conference, December, 1940, p. 7.

He added:

> "When we turn to the actual position of the Indians we find this peculiarity there - that the Indian settlers in Ceylon, to a vast extent, in the case of the large majority of them, do not appear to consider Ceylon as their own country in the sense of identifying their interests with Ceylon."1

To the Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, these views were based on a wrong interpretation of the history of Indian Immigration in Ceylon.[2] According to Mr. Nehru the people of Indian origin in Ceylon "made substantial contribution to the economic development of Ceylon".[3] The views of Ceylon were thus expressed by the Prime Minister of the Island, Mr. Senanayake:

> "I do not think that I misrepresent the "facts of history" when I state that Indian labour did not come to Ceylon to settle down permanently in this country but primarily to seize the opportunities for employment which the Coffee, Tea and Rubber Plantations so generously offered. It is no reflection on Independent India that there was a time when a number of her sons were made, under an arrangement with foreign capitalists in Ceylon, to leave India in search of employment and a fair livelihood abroad, nor can Independent Ceylon be held responsible for the unsatisfactory conditions under which emigration took place then. I do not deny that some of these emigrants may have come to regard their new lands as their home. This is natural and inevitable in the case of settlers in those countries where distance rendered difficult if not impossible the maintenance of any close connection with the motherland. Emigrants to Ceylon however, were not compelled by a similar circumstance to sever their connection with India. Rather, there is every indication that Indians in Ceylon have neither forgotten nor forsaken their home country. The closest association was and is still being maintained by the emigrant with his village, and the facilities for travel have encouraged regular and periodical visits to it. There are several instances where land has been purchased and investments made in their villages by labourers through the agency of the Ceylon Emigration Commissioner. Money is remitted monthly to families or dependants in India. It is hardly necessary to repeat here the arguments and statistics

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1. Ibid., p. 8.
2. Correspondence exchanged between India and Ceylon. 1947-48. Letter No. 1252 PM, dated Sept. 8, 1948, from Jawahar Lal Nehru to D.S. Senanayake.
3. Letter from Mr. Nehru to Mr. Senanayke, July 17, 1948, para 2.

> available in published reports demonstrating the 'fludity' of Indian labour, the number in Ceylon fluctuating in direct proportion to the opportunities for employment."[1]

Mr. Senanayake went to the extent of charging India of having taken an extraordinary interest in the questions relating to the Indian residents in Ceylon. He contended that the Indian Government had gone to the length of maintaining an Agent in Ceylon "to safeguard the interests in a foreign country of persons whom they continued to regard as their citizens."[2] No such concern had been shown by India in the case of non-estate emigrants, nor "has it been shown by the mother countries in Europe in the case of those nationals who migrated to such countries like America and Australia solely for colonization and settlement as pioneers with all the risks these entailed."[3] He also argued that there was no justification for the claim that Indian immigrant labour had come to Ceylon to settle down on equal terms with the indigenous population. "The special privileges sanctioned by the Government of Ceylon", Mr. Senanayake went on, "were not so much benefits considered necessary to attract immigrant labour, but really conditions demanded by the Government of India for the well-being of her citizens in Ceylon and in view of which the Indian Government declared Ceylon as one of the countries to which emigration was lawful under the Indian Emigration Act of 1922."[4] On the question of political rights the Prime Minister of Ceylon argued that the Indian labourer might have enjoyed the same political status as a Ceylonese at a time in the past when the attendant rights were

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1. S.L. Poplai (Ed): Select Documents on Asian Affairs, 1947-50, pp. 107-8.
2. Ibid., p. 108.
3. Ibid., p. 108, para 3.
4. Ibid., para 4.

ill-defined and of no consequence. "It was when their value was enhanced by advances in self-government that attention was drawn to these rights which consequently became the subject of dispute and discussion."[1] When the franchise was first introduced in 1912, the electorate was limited to the Europeans, Burghers and the educated Ceylonese which excluded even the educated Indians.[2] Mr. Senanayake contended that "in 1933, when the Ceylon Government desired to grant the same rights and privileges of membership in village committee to Indian estate labourers as to the indigenous villagers, it was the Agent of the Government of India who objected to the proposal on the ground that these labourers have little interest in Village Committee elections, even stating that the proposal may prove detrimental to the indigenous villagers themselves."[3] It was further argued that whatever contribution the Indian labour might have made to the economic development of the Island was "incidental and subordinate to other considerations which attracted foreign capital and labour to Ceylon."[4] The Prime Minister of Ceylon concluded by suggesting:

> "It cannot however be pretended that it was any ardent desire to develop Ceylon that persuaded Indians to leave their country for this. It was rather the lack of opportunities for employment in the village and its offer on very reasonable and attractive terms in this Island that drew them away from the soil and home, to which they were so much attached, and brought them in large numbers to Ceylon. One must not fail to appreciate and acknowledge the very great benefits of such emigration to the emigrants and India herself. I may say that when Indian labour came to work on estates in Ceylon, they came with the certainty

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1. Ibid., para 5.
2. Jennings, Sir Ivor: The British Commonwealth of Nations, p. 151.
3. Poplai, op. cit., p. 109.
4. Ibid., p. 110.

of employment on very favourable conditions and the hope of free repatriation at the end, and certainly not in the spirit of settlers prepared to face the risks of true pioneers. It is clear therefore that Indian labour migrated to this Island primarily, I should even say solely, for employment on estates."[1]

This was the position on the eve of transfer of power to both India and Ceylon. During the period 1945-46 two important developments took place which had a very important bearing on the problem of Indians in Ceylon. First the Soulbury Commission and second the Knavesmere Estate Incident of May 1946. To these, therefore, now we turn.

§ 7

The Soulbury Commission

It was on July 5, 1944 that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had announced in the House of Commons the decision of His Majesty's Government to appoint a commission to visit Ceylon in connection with the reform of the Constitution.[2] The Commission headed by Lord Soulbury arrived in Colombo on December 22, 1944 and made investigations till April 7, 1945. The Board of Ministers, the Ceylon National Congress and the Sinhala Mahasabha boycotted the inquiry and passed the Free Lanka Bill in March 1945.[3] The Mahasabha empowered its president to take all necessary steps reasonably to obtain the support of the minorities in order to secure the greatest possible unity on the constitutional question.[4] Curiously it also (in regard to Indians) harked back to the stand of the Sinhalese delegation to Delhi in 1940 and even asked the State Council to proceed with the pending bills

1. Ibid., p. 109, paras 7-8.
2. India Quarterly, Jan. - March 1947, p. 54.
3. Ibid., p. 55.
4. Ibid., p. 56.

for restriction of immigration and registration of the non-Ceylonese.

On March 9, 1945, the Ceylon Indian Congress submitted a memorandum to the Commission embodying a five-fold demand on the franchise, citizenship, representation, re-entry and immigration questions.[1] They demanded that adult franchise should be accorded to them absolutely on a par with the rest of the people of Ceylon. Every British adult subject resident in an electroral district for six months should have a vote.[2] Secondly, equal citizenship rights should be given for those who had resided in Ceylon for five years and would give a declaration of intention of adopting Ceylon as their home.[3] Thirdly, as Indians constitute nearly 16% of the total population, the constituencies should be so delimited as to ensure the return of 15 Indians to the legislature. Joint electorates were also favoured.[4] Regarding the Executive, the Council of Ministers should be composite so that the distribution of Executive power might centralize any attempts at communal domination.[5] Fourthly, all Indians should, once lawfully admitted, have the same unrestricted right of re-entry as other Ceylonese (at that time if an Indian was out of the Island for a year he could not re-enter it). Lastly, the legislature should have no power to enact unilateral legislation affecting immigration from India or adversely affecting the rights of Indian immigrants lawfully admitted. The Report of the Commission was released for publication on October 9, 1945. The decision of the

1. Jennings: The Commonwealth of Asia, Chapter VI.
2. Namasivayam, S.: Legislatures of Ceylon, Chapter II.
3. Ibid., p. 69.
4. Ibid., p. 71.
5. Weerawardana: Ceylon and Her Citizens, Chapter VI.

Secretary of State for Colonies regarding the constitutional reforms based on the Soulbury Report was announced in a White Paper on October 31.[1] On November 9, the Ceylon State Council accepted the constitutional decisions by 51 to 5 votes, two Indian members voting against them.

On the question of franchise, the Soulbury Commission recommended that universal franchise on the existing basis should be retained.[2] The future government of Ceylon was allowed to modify it when necessary. The Commission expressed the opinion that the government of Ceylon must be entitled "to determine the conditions under which the inhabitants of Ceylon may acquire the franchise."[3] The net effect of this was that the Indians were to continue under the existing draconian stipulations of having to prove the domicile of origin or of choice, and in the case of the undomiciled, the two alternative qualifications - either a literacy and a property qualification as under the 1924-31 Constituion, or a Certificate of Permanent Settlement to be granted on production of evidence of five-year residence and a declaration either of permanent settlement in the Island, or of the intention to settle permanently, the renunciation of any claim to special protection afforded by India.[4]

The Commission admitted that the number of Indians registered as voters under these hard tests had dwindled down from 2,25,000 in 1939 to 1,68,000 in 1943. The demand of the Indians, therefore, continued as before - that Indians already resident in the Island, if they were adult and had resided in a constituency for the

1. Namasivayam, S.: Parliamentary Government in Ceylon, pp. 66-67.
2. Cmd. 6677, para 223.
3. Ibid., Chapter X.
4. Ibid., paras 217-218.

stipulated period should be given the right to vote on a par with the Ceylonese nationals.[1]

The question of citizenship, like franchise was left to future government of Ceylon.[2] The problem had been considerably simplified due to the virtual cessation of emigration of Indian unskilled labour owing to the ban imposed upon it by the government of India on August 1, 1939. Most Indians had thus lived in Ceylon for more than five years and the Commission itself had admitted that 80% of the Indians whose names had appeared in the Preliminary Lists was either born in Ceylon or had resided in Ceylon for at least ten years. In view of their recruitment on an undertaking of an equal citizenship right and the fulfilment of five years' residence test as was recommended by the Donoughmore Commission, the Indians viewed with great resentment the failure of the Commission to recommend the principle of equality for Indian and Ceylonese nationals.[3] The Commission, in the judgment of the Indian leaders had surrendered to the anti-Indian demands of the extremists among the Ceylonese.[4]

On the question of representation the Commission expressed the hope that through delimitation of the constituencies Indians could be facilitated to return, in proportion to their population, 14 Indian representatives to the proposed lower chamber of 101 members.[5] It must be stated that although on proportional basis Indians should have obtained 9 out of the 58 seats in the existing State Council, actually they secured only 2 seats.[6] The hope

1. Ludowyk, E.F.C.: Story of Ceylon, Chapter 2.
2. Mendis: Ceylon To-day and Yesterday, Chapter 9.
3. The Donoughmore Report, 1928, Cmd. 3131, Chapter II.
4. Pakeman, op. cit., Chapter 9.
5. Ibid., p. 120.
6. Ibid., p. 121.

expressed by the Soulbury Commission that Indians would secure 14 seats failed to inspire the trust and confidence of the Indian population.[1] Much depended on the functioning of the Delimitation Commission. Regarding representation in the Executive, the Commission expressed the firm hope that the future Prime Ministers would show enough statesmanship to reserve a proportion of portfolios for the minority interests.[2] This hope again had no concrete foundations. It will be remembered that in 1936 the Sinhalese had formed an All-Sinhalese Board of Ministers; they had even boycotted the Soulbury Commission itself just because His Majesty's Government had announced that the Commission would consult the minority opinion.[3]

Finally, the Commission endorsed the demands of the Ceylonese Ministers (embodied in their constitutional scheme of September 1944) that the Government of Ceylon should have the power to prohibit or restrict immigration into the Island and that a bill dealing only with that subject should not come within the category of bills to be reserved for His Majesty's assent.[4] Regarding re-entry, the Commission made a reservation to the effect that it should not be competent to the Ceylon Government unfairly or unreasonably to prohibit or restrict the re-entry of persons normally resident in Ceylon on the date of the coming into force of the Immigration Bill.[5] They recommended that the Governor-General should reserve an Immigration Bill in case its provisions

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1. Ibid., p. 124.
2. Mills, L.A. and Associates; The World of South East Asia, pp. 267, 293, 304.
3. Cmd. 6677, p. 3.
4. Ibid., para 242.
5. Ibid., para 242 (i).

were of such unreasonable or unfair character. Now this recommendation again was too general to create a climate of confidence; in the ultimate analysis, the decision regarding reasonableness and fairness rested with the Ceylon Ministers and the Governor-General.[1] The Indians also realised that they would have to look up for protection to the Governor-General, who could not be expected to risk a constitutional deadlock with his ministers on the question of Indian re-entry.[2] The Commission proposed two remedies of a general character: (a) that the Parliament of Ceylon shall not pass any law, rendering persons of any community or religion liable to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of other communities or religions are not made liable and (b) any Bill, any of the provisions of which have evoked serious opposition by any racial or religious community and which, in the opinion of the Governor-General, was likely to work out injustice to any such community, must be reserved by the Governor-General for His Majesty's assent.[3]

§ 8

The Knavesmere Incident

It was in the wake of the Soulbury Commission's Report that the Knavesmere Estate incident must be understood. Knavesmere was a privately-owned rubber and tea estate entirely worked by about 500 Indian labourers. The Government acquired it for co-operative farming and village expansion under their Land Development Scheme. Many of the Indian workers had been there for

1. Pakeman, op. cit., p. 135.
2. Ibid., p. 136.
3. Cmd. 6677, para 242 (iii-iv).

years ranging from 5 to 30. At the time of purchase, Indians had been told that they could continue working as usual, but suddenly notice was issued that they should vacate the estate by April 30, 1946.[1] The proposed scheme for co-operative estate had not even been officially published with the result that the Indian workers came to know of the Government plans only when they were served the quit notice.[2] It appears that even these plans provided no legal sanction for such wholesale exclusion of resident Indian workers. They were, however, informed that alternative employment would be found for them on other estates.[3] The Ceylon Indian Congress represented that if the Government agreed to extend allotments to Indians on the basis of 5 year residence on the estate, the rest of the Indian labourers would be advised to vacate the estate lines. They proved statistically that, on this basis, allotments had to be made only to 80 out of 125 families leaving 195 more allotments, i.e., 2/3 of land on the estate to Sinhalese peasants.[4] By now the Government realized that the <u>en masse</u> notice was illegal and so served fresh individual notices asking them to leave the estate on May 31, 1946, threatening them with criminal prosecution, in case of default, for tresspass on the estate. The portentous fact that not even one Indian labourer had been considered to be entitled to continue on the land filled them with apprehension of possible wholesale evictions from the other estates as well.[5] The Congress requested the Government not

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1. India Quarterly, Vol. III, No. I, p. 54.
2. Ibid., p. 55.
3. Ibid., p. 56.
4. Rao, P.R.R.: India and Ceylon, p. 47.
5. India Quarterly, Vol. III, No. I, p. 59.

to proceed with the prosecutions so as to facilitate negotiations for an amicable settlement.[1] The Government refused to respond and instituted criminal prosecution of 365 men, women and children and refused rations from the estate shops.[2] This led to a strike by 40,000 Indian workers in the Killain valley. On June 18, 90,000 labourers in the Hatten area went on strike. The strike continued till July 9, when it was given up on the advice of the Indian National Congress to enable negotiations by the Indian leaders and Government.[3]

The viewpoint of the Ceylon Government was that these labourers were offered alternative employment while no such offer was being made in the case of labourers of other estates, that there would be no land for allotment to the Sinhalese peasants if the case of Indian workers for allotments on the estate was considered and that the Indian labourer was not the Ceylon Government's responsibility.[4] The only thing it would and could do was to find repatriation passage for him when he was found as an unemployed vagrant. The Indians pleaded that they had been on the estates for a number of years, and pointed to the prevailing practice of discharging first the labourer that came last in times of depression or retrenchment.[5] The <u>en masse</u> eviction struck them with fear that large sections of them might be forced to become vagrants in the streets of Ceylon to be repatriated to India.[6] They remonstrated that instead of uprooting them from their homes and transplanting them elsewhere, the

1. Ceylon observer, June 2, 1946.
2. Times of Ceylon, May 31, 1946.
3. Ibid., June 1, 1946.
4. Ceylon observer, June 6, 1946.
5. Ceylon Daily News, June 15, 1946.
6. Ceylon observer, May 31, 1946.

Government should settle the Sinhalese on the lands reserved for Indians. In this connection they pointed to Mr. Senanayake's admission that three-fifths of the land in Ceylon had been lying uncultivated and uninhabited.[1] The criminal prosecution of even old men, women and children on the estate, in spite of Pandit Nehru's request that the Government should defer action to allow time for consultation, confirmed their fears. The Government of India, through their Representative, Mr. Aney, protested against this attitude.[2] After five months the estate dispute was settled. Under the terms of the settlement, the Indian labourers were to complete evacuation of the estate by October 26, 1946, in favour of the Sinhalese peasants to whom allotments had been made. The Government, on its part, besides withdrawing the prosecutions launched against them, was to arrange (through the Acting Governor) pardon for those already convicted or undergoing imprisonment and to provide transport for the men to alternative places of employment arranged for by the Government.[3] Accordingly 210 workers were granted pardon by the Acting Governor. One sequal to this incident was the preparation of an ordinance by the Government to evict estate labourers who, after the expiry of their contract of service, continued to remain in possession of the estate line rooms.[4] The object was to provide a simple and expeditious machinery to deal with incidents like the Knavesmere Estate.

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1. Times of Ceylon, May 29, 1946.
2. Ibid., June 3, 1946.
3. Ceylon observer, October 2, 1946.
4. Ceylon observer, October 5, 1946.

The whole incident was a result of the absence of a constitutional recognition of Indian franchise and citizenship rights in the new Constitution and the application of the domicile test in making allotments on estates under the village Expansion Ordinance.[1] The uncertainty in regard to their constitutional future deepened with every step taken to implement the new Constituion. On May 16, 1946, the Colonial Secretary announced the new constitutional proposals based almost entirely on the Soulbury Commission Report. On May 24, the Governor of Ceylon appointed a Delimitation Commission.[2] On July 1, Indians submitted their case before the Commission for multiple constituencies to return at least 12 Indians to the new House of Representatives as envisaged in the Soulbury Report. But it was reported that under the Commission's proposals, only 7 Indians could be returned from 89 electoral districts that had been delimited.[3] Only equal franchise and citizenship rights to all Indians and recognition of Indian labour as part of the permanent population of the country on quinquennial residential test and declaration of intention to settle permanently in Ceylon would ensure the future of Indians in Ceylon.

§ 9

The Main Issues

Before we proceed to consider the development of the Indian problem in recent years, let us briefly summarise the main issues involved in the question. Since 1871, the population of the Island

1. Times of Ceylon, September 15, 1946.
2. The Hindu, Madras, May 18, 1946.
3. Ceylon Daily News, October 3, 1946.

had been constantly multiplying. The following table[1] gives the increase in population along with the percentage from 1871 to 1946:-

Year	Population	Increase per cent
1871	2,400,380	-
1881	2,759,738	15.0
1891	3,009,789	9.0
1901	3,565,954	18.6
1911	4,106,350	15.2
1921	4,498,605	9.6
1931	5,306,871	18.0
1946	6,657,339	25.4

Now this population of the Island from times immemorial has been a mixed one; the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils have been living side by side for ages. In the 19th century, the Indian Tamils were brought to work on plantation. The breakdown of the figures[2] of different sections of Ceylon's population in 1946 was as follows:-

Low country Sinhalese	2,902,509
Kandyan Sinhalese	1,717,998
Ceylon Tamils	733,731
Indian Tamils	780,589
Ceylon Moors	373,559
Indian Moors	35,624
Burghers and Eurasians	41,926
Malays	22,508
Veddahs	2,361
Europeans	5,418
Others	41,116
Total	6,657,339

In the second Chapter, we mentioned that in the thirteenth century, the Tamils had an independent kingdom in the North. From that time onward, the Ceylon Tamils have largely been found in the Northern Province.[3] The Indian Tamils mainly inhabit the

1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon (a survey), Colombo, pp. 59 ff.
2. Weerawardana, op. cit., p. 23.
3. Ibid., p. 25.

Central and Sabaragamuwa Provinces, and are most numerous in the Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Kandy Districts. The interesting fact about the population increase in Ceylon is that it is not so much due to immigration from India as it is the result of the increase in birth rate in the Island on the whole.[1] Better - health measures over the years have reduced the number of deaths, so that each year, the number of people being born and surviving, has exceeded the number of people dying. Emigration from India has accounted broadly for about 3% increase in the population of Ceylon, during the period 1871-1946.[2]

So far as the Ceylon Tamils are concerned they are the descendants of the Tamil invaders from South India, who destroyed the civilization of the tank country. When the economy of this area broke down completely, the population receded before malaria and the jungle northwards and southwards, the Tamils to the North and the Sinhalese to the South.[3] Although physically the Ceylon Tamils cannot be distinguished from the Sinhalese, culturally they have preserved many features of a more rigid Hinduism, including caste and purdah, and an Indian rather than the Ceylonese form of dress.[4] The Jaffna peninsula is not a fertile part of the Island and the Jaffna Tamil, therefore, has been noted for his industry, intellect and simple style of living. The Indian Tamils have a community of outlook, interests and aspirations with the Ceylon Tamils.[5] They mix with them more

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1. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon, op. cit., p. 1.
2. Ceylon observer, June 17, 1947.
3. Weerawardana, op. cit., p. 29.
4. Times of Ceylon, Christmas No. 1927, p. 39.
5. Bassett: Romantic Ceylon, Chapter 3.

frequently and more unreservedly than with others. The fact that these two communities are concentrated in specified areas, rouses the suspicion and anxiety of the majority community, i.e., the Sinhalese.[1] This circumstance has given rise to the Federal Movement in Ceylon, which demands that the districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Yavuniya, Trincomalee, Batticaloa, Matale, Badulla and Nuwara Eliya be converted into Tamil Federal Areas.[2]

Thus the main issues involved in the problem of Indians in Ceylon have been (i) franchise, (ii) economic and civic rights, (iii) immigration and (iv) the question of discrimination in public services. In the following, we briefly examine the development of the Indian problem in Ceylon along these lines.

§ 10

The Question of Franchise

So far as the question of franchise is concerned, it may be stated that before 1910, this question did not assume much importance. The Indians were at par with the Ceylonese, because, under the system then prevailing, no section of Ceylon's population had any share in the administration. It was only in 1910 that steps were taken to introduce the principle of election. In a Legislative Council of 11 official and 10 unofficial members, 4 of the latter were to be elected - 2 Europeans, 1 Burgher and 1 other Ceylonese. There was hardly any question at that time of giving any representation to the Indians. But the remarkable phenomenon was that the Ceylonese member, who was elected to the Legislative

1. Cook: Geography of Ceylon, p. 39.
2. International Bulletin on the Tamil Language Rights. Colombo, p. 3.

Council in 1910, was no other than a Tamil himself although the Ceylonese electorate could have returned a Sinhalese.[1] This spirit of amity and goodwill was destroyed partly under the pressure of economic forces then in operation and partly because of the deliberate policies followed by the British Government.[2] Gradually the elective principle came to be extended. The British Government, however, insisted on keeping separate registers for voters for the Burghers and Ceylonese communities. The Indians had not been given any elective seats in the legislature although their number by this time had swelled considerably. It was for the first time in 1920 that the 23 non-official members of the Legislative Council were to be in a majority in a Council of 37 members. Eleven persons were to be elected on a territorial basis; and Indians were conceded one seat by nomination.[3] The general qualifications for a voter related to literacy and property - tests which, if applied to the Indian community, would not have given them any effective representation.[4]

In 1923, the Ceylon (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council created a new legislative body, which was to consist of 12 officials and 37 non-officials.[5] Instead of 1, two Indians were now to be nominated to represent the Indian community. Indians with six months' residence in the respective electoral districts were given on the same basis as the rest of the population, a vote in territorial electorate as well as the additional right to elect two communal members in an All-Ceylon electorate. The term

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1. Namasivayam: Legislatures of Ceylon, p. 31.
2. Ibid., p. 33.
3. Encyclopedia Brittanica, Vol. 5, p. 180.
4. Ibid., p. 181.
5. Ibid., p. 182.

'Indian' was defined as follows:-

> "The term 'Indian means any person who is a native of British India or of the territories of any Native Prince or Chief under the suzerainty of His Majesty exercised through the Governor-General of India or through any Governor or other officer subordinate to the Governor-General of India, and is a resident of Ceylon, but is not domiciled therein."[1]

This Constitution did not prove workable; persistent demands were made for the widening of the franchise. The Donoughmore Commission was, therefore, set up. This Commission recommended complete abolition of communal representation; it also laid down that literacy should not remain as one of the qualifications for electors at elections for the State Council.[2] In doing this, the Donoughmore Commission was giving a major concession to the point of view of the Indians in Ceylon. The Commission was extremely sympathetic to the Indian community and expressed the opinion that if a literacy test were to be imposed, it would work out injustice to the illiterate Indians in Ceylon.[3] They stated:

> "We would hesitate before recommending the imposition of any qualification which would deny to these humble people the political status of their more fortunate fellows and the opportunity of escaping from conditions some of which are incongruous in any country with established democratic institutions.... In view of the economically helpless position of these Indian immigrant workers, their large numbers, and their utter lack of organisation, it was decided at the last revision of the constitution that two Indian communal representatives should be members of the Legislative Council.... In considering whether the retention of these two members on a communal basis is desirable or necessary, it has to be remembered that on the one hand, the British planters naturally tend to regard their relationship with their estate workers

1. The Ceylon (Legislative Council) Order-in-Council, 1923, p. 233. Papers relating to the constitutional history of Ceylon.
2. The Donoughmore Report, p. 87, Colombo.
3. Ibid., p. 86.

> primarily from an industrial point of view, while the Ceylonese members of the Legislative Council, on the other hand, including a number who are themselves planters, just as naturally, do not feel any great responsibility for an element in the population that is largely alien and for this reason not viewed with any enthusiasm."[1]

The Donoughmore Commission did not favour any of the suggestions which sought to change the minimum age for voters, or the retention of property, income or literacy qualifications.[2] They recommended the adoption of manhood suffrage with three possible exceptions: (a) the minimum age for women to be 30 years; (b) voting right be confined to those who apply for registration of their names, and (c) a qualification of five years' residence in the Island to be introduced, so that voting right may be given only to those who have an abiding interest in the country.[3] These exceptions were made in order to meet the wishes of the anti-Indian sections in Ceylon.

These recommendations were vehemently opposed by the Sinhalese opinion in the Island.[4] They feared that any considerable extension of franchise to Indians such as was proposed by the Donoughmore Commission, would seriously jeopardize the interest of the Kandyans, and that the Indians, with their present number, would easily swamp the Sinhalese vote in those areas. A combination of the Ceylon Tamil and the Indian vote because of the racial, linguistic and religious affinity would easily rout the Sinhalese.[5] They, therefore, agitated for tightening up the qualifications so far as the Indian voters were concerned; they demanded that in addition to the qualification of five-years residence, as

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1. Ibid., p. 95.
2. Cmd. 3131, Chapter III.
3. Cmd. 6677, Chapter III.
4. Ibid., p. 19.
5. Jennings: The British Commonwealth of Nation, Chapter XI.

recommended by the Donoughmore Commission, there should be a further condition that every Indian, in order to get the right to vote, must prove his intention to reside in Ceylon with a view to becoming a permanent element in the population of the Island.[1] In the context of the Sinhalese opposition to the main recommendations of the Donoughmore Commission, there was no conceivable chance of these recommendations being accepted and implemented.[2] The Governor of Ceylon, Sir Herbert Stanley, in his famous Despatch suggested modifications of the Donoughmore Commission's proposals. He proposed that for domiciled and undomiciled alike the preliminary requirements to be a voter should be (i) British nationality, (ii) a minimum age of 21 years for persons of either sex, (iii) the absence of mental disability or criminal antecedents and (iv) the condition of residence for six months, of the eighteen months immediately preceding the preparation of the register, in the electoral district to which the register relates.[3] In this way, he hoped that practically all Ceylonese, and quite an appreciable number of Indians and also a few Europeans would be entitled for registration. For the undomiciled he proposed two alternative qualifications in lieu of that of domicile. The first alternative would be compliance with the franchise conditions of the 1923 constitution, which mainly related to literacy and possession or occupation of property as has been stated earlier in this Chapter. Thus Indians of the higher strata of society engaged either in commerce or professional work would be entitled to registration. The other alternative would be the production of a certificate of permanent

1. Ibid., p. 150.
2. Weerawardana, op. cit., Chapter VI.
3. Cmd. 6677. Chapter IV.

settlement granted by some duly appointed officer.[1]

The proposals made in the Stanley Despatch evoked bitter criticism from the Indian community in Ceylon.[2] His proposal of the standard test of domicile was viewed with hostility.[3] The term 'domicile of origin' was extremely vaugue and there were various enactments in Ceylon which defined Ceylonese in terms of domicile of origin. The domicile of origin, after all, is a status attaching to a person at birth, and one had obviously to prove that his father had a Ceylon domicile when he was born. In a hypothetical example, suppose an Indian migrated to Ceylon in 1880; obviously when he came to the Island, his domicile was India. Now, if he had a son in 1881, and there was no opportunity for a change of domicile the domicile of origin of the father would be passed on to the son. That is to say, the son's domicile of origin would be India, although he was born in Ceylon and had lived in the Island continuously since 1881. Moreover, the procedure to obtain a certificate of permanent settlement was extremely cumbersome.[4] The poor Indian worker, with his conservative nature and small purse, would be most reluctant to undertake long journeys with a view to getting certificate, which would get him a vote which in economic terms, would mean very little, atleast in the immediate present. It would be extremely difficult for anybody to prove his residence in the Island for five years, particularly because the records on the subject were kept in a most unsatisfactory manner.[5] Again, the children of

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1. Ceylon Sesssional Paper XXXIV - 1929.
2. Times of Ceylon, June 4, 1930, p. 4.
3. Ceylon observer, September 6, 1930, p. 3.
4. Cmd. 6677, Chapter X.
5. Hulugalle: British Governors of Ceylon, p. 79.

the certificated persons were not ipsofacto entitled to a domicile of origin.[1] These were the grounds on which the Indian community vehemently opposed the proposals contained in the Stanley Despatch.[2]

The British Government, however, rejected the contentions of the Indian community and accepted the terms of the Stanley Despatch. The ultra nationalist section of the Sinhalese achieved their first major victory, and onwards, they demanded a more and more substantial share in political power in the Island.[3]

The Legislative Council of Ceylon accepted the proposals contained in the Despatch by a narrow majority and in 1931, an Order-in-Council was issued. The definition of an Indian was nowhere given in the Order-in-Council and was implied in the terms "British Subject" and "British-protected person". This decision naturally aroused the fears and anxiety of the Indian community in Ceylon.[4] To allay their apprehension, Lord Passfield, the Secretary of State for Colonies, issued a statement:

> "These proposals do not seem to His Majesty's Government to involve any racial discrimination against Indians.... His Majesty's Government wishes to make it clear that there is no intention of repealing or amending to the detriment of Indians any of the Laws of Ceylon, affecting their position or privileges; nor of abrogating or lessening the powers and functions of the Agent of the Government of India or of the Controller of Immigrant Labour. It follows..... that any Bill diminishing or abrogating any of the existing conditions or privileges of Indian immigrants would fall in the category of those to which the Governor could not assent unless he had previously obtained the instructions of the Secretary of State thereon or unless it contained a suspending clause."[5]

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1. Ludowyk: Story of Ceylon, p. 72.
2. For a good summary of these arguments, see Ceylon Observer, October 13, 1931.
3. Jennings: The Approach to Self-Government, Chapter V.
4. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
5. Telegram from Secretary of State for Colonies to Governor of Ceylon dated June 10, 1930, Sessional Paper, XVI, 1930, p. 2.

The dissatisfaction among the Indians in Ceylon, however, could not be assuaged, even though, under the Order-in-Council of 1931, the number of Indians registered as electors had risen to about 100,000 (an increase by about 700 per cent). The expansion of electorate under the Donoughmore Constitution gave Indians only two seats; under the Constitution of 1923, besides a territorial vote, Indians had been assured of at least two seats in the legislature through communal electorate. The feeling of disappointment, therefore, was quite natural. The complicated procedure prescribed to obtain a certificate of permanent settlement, had considerably reduced the value of the theoretical increase in the number of Indian voters.[1] The Indian leaders felt that the British Government in Ceylon in collaboration with the Sinhalese Chauvinists, was depriving the Indian community of real franchise. On the other hand, the Sinhalese leaders also were dissatisfied and were even alarmed at the increasing strength of the Indian electors. In 1931, the number of Indian electors was hundred thousand; in 1936 it had gone up to 1,45,000; in 1938, it was 1,70,000 and in 1939, 2,25,000.[2] In 1938, further steps were taken to restrict the number of voters by administrative means - the so-called 'tightening procedure'. Under this procedure, instructions were given that no evidence relating to the question of domicile was to be accepted unless it had been verified by a Registering Officer in the actual presence of the prospective voter. This measure considerably reduced the number of voters in many districts in 1940-41.[3] Most of the voters were

1. Weerawardana, op. cit., Chapter VI.
2. Soulbury Commission Report, paras 210 and 213.
3. Ceylon Sessional Paper No. VII, 1941, pp. 3-4. Also refer to Sessional Paper No. IV, 1942, p. 5.

extremely reluctant to undergo the rigorous procedure to get their names placed on the electoral register. The provision requiring personal attendance of the voter concerned, created fears in the mind of the illiterate workers that they might be immediately repatriated to India.[1] The ban on emigration imposed by the Government of India in 1939 in regard to unskilled workers, had also contributed to the reduction in the strength of the Indian voters. The second election to the State Council in 1936 returned only two Indians, as in the first election of 1931.[2] The Government, having realised that there had been a substantial reduction in the number of Indian voters as a result of the tightening up procedure and other causes, decided to nominate a third Indian to the State Council to give them extra representation. Thus in 1936, with a population of 7,60,000, the Indians were represented in the Legislature of Ceylon by 3 representatives 2 electors and 1 nominated.[3] In a legislature of 50 elected members, the Sinhalese had 39 members.

With the coming of the second World War in 1939, the general elections which were due to be held in 1941, were postponed.[4] Meanwhile, political developments in India were having their impact on the politics of the Island and the movement of independence was gaining momentum in both countries. In 1941, the Secretary of State for Colonies promised that at a suitable time, a Constitutional Commission would be set up to consider the question of constitutional advance in Ceylon.[5] This statement

1. Ceylon Times, October 6, 1933.
2. Ceylon Times, October 9, 1936.
3. Annual Report of the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon, 1936, para 4.
4. Soulbury Commission's Report, para 78.
5. Ibid., para 79.

failed to satisfy the State Council. In December 1941, Japan entered the war, and this circumstance sharply underlined the importance of Ceylon in the Allied Strategy.[1] In 1942, Sir Stafford Cripps visited India and the Ceylonese Ministers insisted on the immediate promise of dominion status for the Island. This request was turned down; but on May 26, 1943, an important declaration was issued by His Majesty's Government, in which Ceylon was promised full responsible government after the war.[2] In February 1944, the Ministers in Ceylon prepared the Draft Constitution. They were extremely unhappy at the announcement made by His Majesty's Government that fullest opportunity for consultation with the minority community would be given before any constitutional reform was introduced in Ceylon.[3] The Ministers, therefore, withdrew their scheme of February 1944. The main features of this we have already examined in the second chapter. In order to break the deadlock, the British Government announced the appointment of the Soulbury Commission in September 1944. The main recommendations of this Commission have already been examined earlier in this chapter.

Another important aspect of the problem of the franchise of the Indians in Ceylon was the direct negotiations that were carried on between the Government of Ceylon and the Government of India. We have already referred to the circumstances in which Mr. Nehru visited Ceylon in 1939 at the time of the dismissal of the Indian daily paid workers. In 1940, under the

1. Churchill: The Second World War, Vols. I-V.
2. Hansard (Colombo) May 26, 1943.
3. Jennings: Approach to Self-Government, p. 89.
4. Cmd. 6677, Chapter XI.

inspiration supplied by the British authorities in both the countries, an Indo-Ceylon Relations Exploratory Conference was held at Delhi.[1] The Indian delegation was led by Sri G.S. Bajpai and that of Ceylon by Mr. D.S. Senanayake. The stand taken by Bajpai was that the two countries must agree on certain guiding principles on the basis of which, the economic and political rights of the Indian community in Ceylon should be regulated.[2] Senanayake agreed with the proposal but he contended that in formulating these principles, the peculiar circumstances of the Island must be fully taken into account.[3] These circumstances, according to him were mainly economic. The economy of Ceylon would never permit a large number of Indians to be absorbed, and so he advocated the theory of absorbable quantum of Indians in Ceylon.[4] According to Senanayake, the Indian population in Ceylon could be placed in two categories: (a) those who were purely of a migratory character and always regarded Indiam as their home; and (b) those who finally settled down in Ceylon and had developed an abiding interest in the country of their adoption.[5] Ceylon's leaders suggested that some rigid test of proving an abiding interest was absolutely necessary and that the peculiar circumstances of Ceylon did not warrant a simple test of residence of 5 or 10 years for granting privileges of citizenship.[6]

It was not difficult to see that in the first place, a rigid test would be exceedingly difficult to be formulated and that

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1. Ibid., p. 60.
2. Ibid., p. 61.
3. Aiyer, K.N.: Indo-Ceylon Crisis, pp. 42-43.
4. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon, Chapter II.
5. Jennings: The Constitution of Ceylon, p. 81.
6. Ibid., p. 91.

secondly, in actual practice, people of Indian origin could always be thrown out of the Island by administrative implementation of the so-called rigid test. The argument of Mr. Bandayanaike was:

> ".... the conferment of franchise upon those who admittedly have no permanent interests - such as those to whom Mr. Senanayake referred - the conferment of political power on them may result in the exercise of that power against the interests of the other more permanent and established sections of the people. That is where the difficulty arises in this particular case. In the present State Council, although we have no communal representation as such, except for a few nominated members, there are 50 elected seats. Actually a large number of seats which are considered to be Sinhalese seats up-country, are more or less controlled by the Indian labour vote. I can tell you of many cases where although the Indians are not a majority in a particular constituency, yet they are in a controlling position. If two Sinhalese stand for election, the candidate who gets the support of the Indian vote gets the seat. This is a very important consideration that has come up in the State Council for discussion. That situation is going to get worse."[1]

On this reasoning, Mr. Senanayake made the concrete proposal that people of Indian origin in Ceylon would be entitled to the rights and privileges, normally accorded to British subjects and that those who possessed a Ceylon domicile of choice (which must include 5 years' residence) should alone be entitled to vote for the State Council. He made it clear that even this will be conditional on an Indian voter getting a certificate of residence These proposals were hardly acceptable to the Indian delegation.[3] Sir Ramaswamy Mudaliar, an Indian delegate, put forward India's point of view in the following words:

> "I have always understood that the right of franchise is only a method by which a citizen can guarantee to himself other fundamental rights. Otherwise it is meaningless. If a man has merely got the liberty of walking into a polling

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1. Sessional Paper IX, 1941, p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 21.
3. Ibid., p. 22.

> booth and casting his vote once in every 3 or 5 years, what is the benefit of that franchise? The right of franchise is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end - what all constitutionalists considered as the unfailing means by which a citizen or individual granted the franchise can establish other rights. If you predicate in reference to the other rights, then you can put any restrictions whatsoever. What is the value of this right of franchise? Why do you grant it at all?"[1]

There was no meeting ground between India and Ceylon. The Indian delegation realised that the proposals of Ceylon would not only deprive the Indians of franchise, but also of economic rights, which were interlinked with the question of franchise. Sir G.S. Bajpai refused to be a party to an arrangement by which "the Indian, who has worked in Ceylon, is to be thrown back into India as a squeezed lemon".[2]

In 1941, however, the negotiations were resumed at Colombo.[3] Bajpai again represented India. The Colombo talks resulted in an agreement, according to which Indians were divided in two categories: (a) Indians entering Ceylon for the first time, after the date when the Immigration Ordinance came into force; and (b) Indians resident in Ceylon prior to that date. The agreed proposals were a blanket concession to the point of view of Ceylon; all the qualifications were retained - domicile of origin, domicile of choice, literacy and property qualifications, and certificate of permanent settlement. It was provided that proof of domicile of choice could only be established after five years' residence to the satisfaction of a Court, regarding the acquisition of such a domicile, and that registration should

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1. Ibid., p. 46.
2. Ibid., p. 47.
3. Cmd. 6677, p. 61.

only be done on production to the Registering Authority of a certificate by a Court to this effect.[1] It was further provided that a certificate of permanent settlement should be given only to those whose intention to remain in the Island permanently, had been satisfactorily proved, who had means of livelihood and who should not have been away from Ceylon continuously for more than a year.[2] The length of residence prescribed was extended from 5 years to 10 years. Restrictions were also placed on future entrants.[3] It was on these lines that the Ceylon Government prepared the Draft Immigration Ordinance, which they despatched to India for their approval.[4]

This Bajpai-Senanayake Agreement, while dividing Indians into several classes, imposed on them conditions which were hard to be fulfilled by a large majority of the Indian estate workers and whatever political influence they wielded was sure to disappear if the agreement was implemented.[5] The net effect of this would have been the total extinction of the Indian community in Ceylon as a political factor.[6] Luckily, the Central Indian Legislature turned down the agreement, which had implied a complete surrender (on the part of the Government of India) of the interests of the Indian community in the Island. Plainly, the exigencies of the Second World War, the contribution Ceylon was making towards the war efforts of the Allies and the strategic importance of the Island, had obliged the British authorities

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1. Pakeman, op. cit., Chapter 10.
2. Ibid., p. 147.
3. Ibid., p. 149.
4. Weerawardana, op. cit., Chapter VI.
5. The Indo-Ceylon Problem. A Historical Background. Presented by the Virakesari, Colombo to Prime Minister Nehru in October 1962, p. 3.
6. Ibid., p. 4.

in both the countries to come to an agreement. G.S. Bajpai was vehemently criticized all over the country for having betrayed the real interests of the Indian community in Ceylon.[1] The Sinhalese Statesman of Ceylon were, of course, extremely jubilant in the first instance, but were later disappointed when the Indian Legislature refused to ratify the agreement.[2] On the question of franchise, no important development took place until the Ceylon Order-in-Council 1946, which implemented the Soulbury Commission's recommendations. These, we have already surveyed.

11

The Asian Relations Conference and After

In March-April, 1947, an Asian Relations Conference was called at Delhi (March 23 to April 2) attended by 250 delegates from 25 Asian countries. The primary purpose of the Conference was "to bring together the leading men and women of Asia on a common platform to study problems of common concern with the peoples of this continent, to focus attention on social, economic and cultural problems of the different countries of Asia and to foster mutual contacts and understandings between them."[3] Most of the delegations were composed mainly of cultural leaders, drawn from non-official bodies such as Universities, though, several prominent personalities attended (including Mahatma Gandhi, who was present as a guest at the concluding session). The problem of Indians in Ceylon came up for consideration at the Conference but before we come to this, we must refer to the

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1. Hindu, October 1, 1941. Also see Statesman, October 5, 1941 and National Herald, October 10, 1941.
2. Times of Ceylon, November 30, 1941.
3. Keesing's Contemporary Archieves, Oct. 4-11, 1947, p. 8826.

context in which this issue was examined.

At the Plenary sessions, two principal themes were prominent in the speeches - the solidarity and common consciousness of the Asian peoples, and the important part which they had to play in the world.[1] Pandit Nehru, in his inaugural address, declared that "Asia, after a long period of quiescence, has suddenly become important again in world affairs,"[2] and that the old imperialisms were fading away and the isolation which they had imposed upon Asia was breaking down. In their new-found freedom, however, he said, the Asian peoples were not embarking (at the Conference) on "some kind of Pan-Asian movement" directed against their former oppressors.[3] On the contrary, Asia had no designs against anybody, but "stretched her hand out in friendship to Europe and America", with whom she would work in supporting the U.N. in its attempt to achieve the ideal of "one world".[4] In his closing speech Pandit Nehru remarked on the unanimity which had been shown "amongst varied people coming to the conference from the four corners of this mighty continent," and which he called a feature contrasting favourably with similar conferences elsewhere in the world.[5] It was obvious, he said, that the centre of events was shifting from Europe to America and Asia, and it was up to the Asians to realise the part they had to play and to train themselves for it.[6] He warned that they must not think in narrow, purely nationalist terms because,

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1. Ibid., p. 8826.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Hindustan Times, April 2, 1947.
6. Ibid.

although the nations of Asia must inevitably be nationalistic and must advance along the lines of their nationalism, they were facing bigger problems which could not be solved by a nationalistic approach, and they would, therefore, maintain contact and meet together frequently so that they might evolve common plans of action.[1] Mahatma Gandhi, in a brief speech on April 2, remarked that the West was to-day "pining for wisdom"; and that in his view the message of the great spiritual leaders of the East, "who had given to the world what little wisdom it possessed", alone offered hope of salvation; and declared: "I want you to go away with the thought that Asia has to conquer the West - through love and truth."[2]

The main work of the Conference was done in Committees, whose report was unanimously adopted in the plenary session. The report on "National Freedom Movement in Asia" stated that all Asian countries should take effective steps to see that Imperialist domination over them was speedily terminated; that it was clear that for various reasons, the Western colonial powers, specially Britain, could not afford much longer to hold these countries in political subjection; but that there was a danger that attempts might be made to continue economic domination, and that the larger Asian powers should, therefore, give economic aid to the smaller countries, though this, in turn, should not be allowed to lead to domination.[3] The Report also emphasised that the indigenous minorities in any Asian country should support

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1. Ibid.
2. Keesing's Archieves, op. cit., p. 8826.
3. Asian Relations - Being Report of the Proceedings and Documents of the First Asian Relations Conference, New Delhi, March-April 1947, p. 47.

<u>and assist the struggle of that country for freedom, and that all Asian countries should treat non-indigenous minorities fairly.</u>[1] More important was the report on "racial problems and inter-racial migration". It recommended complete legal equality of all citizens, complete religious freedom, and equality before the law of persons of foreign origin who have settled in the country.[2] <u>Regarding the legal status of immigrant populations such as Indians in Burma and Ceylon, it was agreed that a distinction must be made between those immigrants who identified themselves with their adopted country and asked for naturalization, and those who choose to remain nationals of their mother country.</u>[3] The former, the Conference recommended, should be granted citizenship, if they were prepared to comply with naturalization laws; the latter should have equality before the law (though without civic rights), they should enjoy safety of person and property and should be treated generously. While most of the delegates agreed that liberal naturalization laws should regularize the status of existing foreign settlers, opinions varied as to future immigration. Many delegates, though recognizing the right of every country, to control immigration, felt that complete prohibition would lead to ill-feelings and, therefore, they advocated a quota system.[4]

During the discussion of this report at the plenary session on March 26, the Georgian delegate, supported among others by the Azerbajani delegate and by Mrs. Pandit, urged that a recommendation be added calling upon the government of the various

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1. Ibid., p. 48.
2. Ibid., p. 49.
3. Ibid., p. 56.
4. Ibid., p. 151.

Asian countries to implement there principles by means of legislation, but on behalf of the Indian Council of World Affairs, the sponsors of the conference, it was stated that any formal resolution of recommendation to any one was excluded from its purview.[1] A report on cultural affairs stressed the need for developing scientific research in Asia, urged that such research should be related to questions of food, health, and sanitation, thus contributing to the raising of the standard of living of the masses, and also pointed out the importance of removing the illiteracy and of increasing facilities for both adult and child education of all citizens including the minorities.[2]

A few months later, India became free (August 15, 1947); Ceylon was also drawing nearer freedom. Towards the close of 1947, discussions took place between the Prime Minister of India and the Prime Minister of Ceylon during the latter's visit to New Delhi on the question of rights of citizenship for Indian residents in Ceylon. On December 28-29, general discussions related to the determination of the qualifications which would enable Indian residents in Ceylon to acquire Ceylon citizenship.[3] Mr. Nehru suggested that it would be very helpful if Mr. Senanayake could set down in writing the qualifications which, in his view, would be adequate for citizenship.[4] Accordingly, detailed proposals were set out in a letter dated 29th December, 1947 from the Permanent Secretary, Minister of Defence and External Affairs, Government of Ceylon, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations.[5]

1. Ibid., p. 200.
2. Ibid., p. 191.
3. Keesing's Archieves, December 27, 1947, Jan. 3, 1948.
4. Ibid., p. 9020.
5. Ibid., p. 9021.

The text of the letter is given below:

> "With reference to the conversation the Prime Minister, Ceylon, had this morning with your Prime Minister, I am direc ted to state that the special conditions and qualifications suggested for the grant of Ceylon citizenship to the Indian residents in Ceylon are: (i) A period of continuous residence of seven years for persons who are married and 10 years for other persons preceding 31st December, 1941, provided that such period of residence shall have been completed prior to 31st December, 1945. Absence exceeding one year shall constitute a break of continuous residence; (ii) Adequate means of livelihood; (iii) If married, the wife and minor unmarried children, if any, should have ordinarily resided with him; (iv) The applicant should also be in a position to comply with the laws and customs of the country. The preceding conditions should be established in a Court of Law. On the grant of Ceylon citizenship the applicant should forfeit all claims to Indian Citizenship. Any law of naturalization which may hereafter be passed would apply to Indian nationals equally with others. It may be added that Ceylon will in the near future pass immigration laws applicable to all nationals including Indians."[1]

The qualifications suggested in this letter were discussed by the two Prime Ministers on December 30, 1947 and the clauses were considered one by one. On the question of period of residence as a qualification for Ceylon citizenship, it was agreed that the applicant must have resided in Ceylon continuously for a prescribed number of years, either preceding December 31, 1945, or preceding January 1, 1948, it being understood that absence from Ceylon for one year or less, at a time would not constitute a break in the continuity of residence.[2] The Ceylon Prime Minister agreed to consider the suggestion of Mr. Nehru that residence should be for a period of 7 years, preceding January 1, 1948, for both bachelors and married persons. On the question of adequat means of livelihood it was agreed that vagrants or destitutes should not be eligible for citizenship.[3] Mr. Nehru suggested that

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1. Poplai, S.L.: Select Documents on Asian Affairs, p. 94.
2. Ibid., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 92.

no person who was employed, or temporarily unemployed, but employable, should be precluded from citizenship and any condition that the applicant must have an adequate means of livelihood, should be avoided. Mr. D.S. Senanayake agreed to consider the suggestion. Mr. Nehru also agreed to the proposal made by Ceylon that in the case of married persons the wife and minor unmarried children should have ordinarily resided with him.[1] The two Prime Ministers agreed that all applicants for Ceylon citizenship must comply with the laws of the Island on becoming its citizens. Mr. Nehru, however, suggested that it was not reasonable to expect that citizens of Indian origin should be debarred from following their customs, or should be subjected to the customary laws of other groups, and that it should be sufficient to state that applicants should comply with the laws of the country on becoming citizens. Mr. Senanayake agreed to consider this suggestion.[2]

The two Prime Ministers also agreed that the procedure to be prescribed for acquiring citizenship should be simple.[3] There were differences on details. While the Prime Minister of Ceylon expressed the opinion that applications should be received and dealt with by Courts of law, the Prime Minister of India proposed that applications should be received by Commissioners, duly empowered in this behalf by the Government of Ceylon.[4] The applicant would set out his qualifications in his application and support it by an affidavit accompanied by a declaration to

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1. Ibid., p. 93.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Kotelawala, Sir John: An Asian Prime Minister's story, Chapter 13.
4. Poplai, op. cit., p. 93.

make Ceylon his home. The Commissioner after such verification as he might consider necessary would grant the application. If in any particular case the Commissioner found himself unable to grant an application he should refer the matter himself to a Civil Court which should then ask the applicant to satisfy it on the points on which satisfaction was necessary. The Prime Minister of Ceylon promised to have the proposed procedure examined to see if it was feasible.[1] It was agreed that no Indian who is admitted to Ceylon citizenship would be allowed to retain Indian citizenship.[2] The Prime Minister of India promised to examine whether it would be necessary to take any legal steps in India to prevent continuation of Indian citizenship by those who were admitted to Ceylon citizenship.[3]

Finally, we may refer to the elections of 1947 which resulted in a further reduction in the representation of the Indian community in Ceylon. The Ceylon Order-in-Council, 1946 gave detailed qualifications of electors and these related to residence, property and a certificate of permanent settlement. The Delimitation Commission, under the Soulbury Constitution, demarcated the constituencies in such a manner as would have the effect of under-rating the strength of the Indian population.[4] The result of this was that of the total of 101 seats in the Ceylon Legislature, the Indian Tamil Congress could return only 6 members.[5] It will be recalled that before 1931, the ratio of Ceylon Tamils to Sinhalese was 1 : 2; the Indian Tamils had obtained only 2

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1. Kotelawala: op. cit., pp. 102-103.
2. Poplai: op. cit., p. 92.
3. Ibid., p. 93.
4. Jennings: The Constitution of Ceylon, p. 94.
5. Namasivayam: Legislatures of Ceylon, p. 69.

seats. In the elections of 1947, the Ceylon Tamil Congress had captured only 7 seats and their ratio to Sinhalese was 1 : 6.[1] The following table[2] gives the number of seats captured by different political groups in Ceylon in the elections held in August-September, 1947:

Party	Seats
United National Party	42
Independents	21
Lanka Sama Samaj Party (Trotskyist)	10
Ceylon Tamil Congress	7
Indian Tamil Congress	6
Bolshevist Leninist Party	5
Communist (Stalinist) Party	3
Labour	1

Of the 14 Ministers, 11 were Sinhalese, 2 Tamils and 1 Muslim. In terms of religion, 10 were Buddhists, 2 Hindus, 1 Muslim and 1 Christian.[3] If these figures were any indication, the Indo-Ceylon problem was far from being solved in 1947.

§ 12

The Question of Economic Rights

The next important issue involved in the Indo-Ceylon problem was that of the economic and civic rights of the Indian population in the Island. As we stated earlier, during the 19th century, the Indian population did not constitute any serious problem for the two countries. The Indian labour came to the Island in conditions of boom in the Planting Industry. During the first 20 years of the present century, political power, by and large was in the hands of the British rulers, and the Sinhalese and the Tamils suffered alike.[4] It must, however, be stated that throughout this period, the Ceylon Tamils fared better than the Sinhalese because

1. Ibid., p. 73.
2. Keesing's Archieves: Oct. 25 - Nov. 1, 1947, p. 8896.
3. Ibid., p. 8896.
4. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon, p. 46.

of their hard working habits, much greater talents and far better education.[1] As the day of independence began to draw closer, the fears and apprehensions of the Sinhalese began to grow. Instead of rationally examining the fundamental causes of their bad economic condition, the Sinhalese leaders gradually built up the theory that the Indian population in Ceylon - the Ceylon Tamils as well as the Indian Tamils - were solely responsible for their economic difficulties.[2] As more and more political power was conceded to Ceylon, greater and greater benefit came to accrue to the Sinhalese, who were the majority community. In 1931, the Buddhist temporalities Ordinance was passed under pressure from the Buddhist community.[3] It provided that all the revenues and expenditure of the Buddhist temples should be supervised and examined by the Public Trustee, who was to recover the cost of this administration from the property of the temples; the Governor was required to make provision for the levying of the necessary contribution.[4] The complaint of the Ceylon Tamils all along was that during the period 1931-43 there was a total loss of nearly half a million rupees to the public revenue, and that from year to year, the general tax-payer was compelled to pay for the administration of the Temporalities of a section of the population. This was resented not only by the Ceylon Tamils and the Indian Tamils, but also by other communities, as it clearly amounted to discrimination in favour of Buddhism, the religion of the majority of the Sinhalese. Even the Soulbury

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1. Pakeman: op. cit., Chapter 6.
2. Rose: op. cit., Chapter 4.
3. Soulbury Report, pp. 41-42.
4. The Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance, paras 3-4.

Commission was compelled to admit that "*primafacie*" this contention seems to us to be correct and to afford evidence against the Sinhalese majority in the Council of partiality."[1]

In 1942, another discriminatory enactment came with the passage of the Anuradhapura Preservation Ordinance whose purpose was to preserve the historic city of Anuradhapura and facilitate the development of a new town outside the zone of its archaeological remains. An estimate was carried in the Council in March 1941 to provide for the services of a Town Planning Expert, and in the autumn of that year, the Bill was introduced. It was severely criticised on the ground that the Tamils and the Muslims formed a considerable section of the population of Anuradhapura (about 10,000 in all) and either owned or occupied the greater portion of the land affected by the measure.[2] The Bill was passed and forwarded for assent to the Governor in December 1941. After obtaining His Majesty's pleasure, it became a law in September 1942. Other cases of legislation, involving discrimination against Indian community were the Fisheries Ordinance No. 24 of 1940, and the Omnibus Services Licencing Ordinance No. 47 of 1942.[3] The former prohibited any person except a Ceylonese or a Ceylon Company from taking any fish for profit in Ceylon waters without the authority of a Fishing Licence; the second provided for the revocation of any road service licence issued to a Company unless at least 85% of the share capital of the company was held by persons who were Ceylonese. "Ceylonese" was defined as a person domiciled in Ceylon and possessing a Ceylon domicile of origin.[4]

1. Cmd. 6677, p. 42.
2. Times of Ceylon, April 2, 1941.
3. Cmd. 6677, p. 42.
4. The Ceylon Ordinance No. 24 of 1940, p. 4.

The Fisheries Ordinances excluded the Indians from taking fish for profits in Ceylon waters. The provision for issuing a fish-ing licence merely existed on paper. The Ordinance not only cur-tailed the economic rights of the Indian community, it also checked the wave of immigration. It was inspired not only by the economic motive, but also by the political motive of restricting the entry of the Indians in the Island. The Ordinance was merely a prelude of the things to come - in 1941, a full-fledged Immi-gration Bill was moved in the State Council of Ceylon. The Omnibus Service Licencing Ordinance hit the middle-class Indians; the rights of a Corporation or a Company which the Indians might have formed for the protection of their economic rights, were seriously jeopardized by requiring that every road service licence issued to a Company was liable to be revoked unless that Company had atleast 85 per cent of its share money subs-cribed only by Ceylonese. The restrictions imposed by the Ordi-nance were so stringent indeed that by no combination of ingenuity and resources could the Indians benefit in a trade which had a bright future.

The Co-operative Movement in the Island, to which we referred earlier,[1] worked to the disadvantage of the Ceylon Tamils as well as the Indian Tamils. The All-Ceylon Tamil Congress complained to the Soulbury Commission that "the practically compulsory nature of the application of this Movement over the whole Island at State expense cannot be looked upon without serious misgiving,"[2] and deduced from this policy a desire on the part of the Sinhalese to cut out the trade of the Indians. They averred that the

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1. See Chapter V.
2. Soulbury Report, p. 43.

Indians had an aptitude for trade which the Sinhalese did not possess, and that the Government was seeking to employ the machinery and finances of the State to benefit the Sinhalese community at the expense of others. In fact similar dissatisfaction with the Co-operative Movement was expressed by representatives of the Muslim community.[1] Throughout the period 1931-47, the Government of Ceylon gave preference to the Sinhalese community in the allocation of public revenue and work.[2] The problem of agriculture in the Island is, really speaking, the problem of irrigation. Rice is the staple diet of the peasantry and in at least 5 out of the 9 provinces, the success or failure of the rice crop depends upon arrangements for an adequate supply of water to the paddy fields.[3] The dependence of the peasants, and indeed of the whole Island, upon the rice crop was greatly intensified by the Japanese occupation of Burma in 1942, the source of the bulk of the rice supply to Ceylon.[4] For over two thousand years, Sinhalese and Tamil kings in Ceylon constructed tanks - some of them covering several thousand acres - to provide water storage.[5] With the march of time, these tanks were either destroyed or neglected, so that after 1900, much of the agricultural expenditure in Ceylon was incurred on the construction and reconstruction of these great works of irrigation. From 1900 to 1931, about 18½ million rupees were spent by the Government on irrigation works maintained by the Government for which land owners were liable to pay irrigation rates. Of this amount, 48% was devoted to the Northern and Eastern Provinces, where the Tamils

1. Ibid., p. 43.
2. Ibid., p. 44.
3. Petterson: The Far East. A Social Geography, p. 158.
4. Ibid., p. 159.
5. Lands and Peoples, Vol. 4, pp. 167-168.

dominated.[1] These two provinces together were one-tenth of the total population of Ceylon in 1947. In 1931, the estimated irrigable area was 2,38,000 acres, of which about 1,30,000 acres were in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Between 1931 and September 1943, the expenditure on major works construction amounted to about 11½ million rupees, of which the Northern and Eastern Provinces received only 19 per cent.[2] Thus most of the acres which were rendered irrigable by these works after 1931, were in the Central and North-Central Provinces. So far as the village tanks are concerned, before 1931, there was hardly any expenditure on them.[3] Between then and September 1943, out of a total public expenditure on these works, of about 3¼ million rupees, the Tamil Provinces (Northern and Eastern) got only 12½ per cent. In terms of acreage served by the village works, only 14,500 or about 7 per cent of the total (about 2,12,000 acres) were in these two provinces. In the light of these facts, the complaint of the Indian population and also the Ceylon Tamils was that there had been a serious discrimination against them.[4] It was argued by the Sinhalese leaders that on the basis of public expenditure per head, of the total population of the Island, the people of the Tamil provinces were very well served in the era prior to 1931 and received a good deal more than their proportionate share of the revenue, available for works of irrigation.[5] It was contended by them that though since 1931 their share was substantially reduced, it was still in excess of the per capita ratio.[6] Of

1. Cmd. 6677, para 152.
2. Ibid., para 155.
3. Ibid., para 156.
4. Ceylon Observer, December 25, 1943.
5. Times of Ceylon, January 2, 1943.
6. Ceylon Observer, Annual, 1942, p. 17.

the irrigation expenditure of some 30 million rupees, during the period 1905-1943, over ten million rupees were spent in the Tamil provinces. The Sinhalese argument, therefore, was that during this period, special favour was shown to the Tamils and that it was only after 1931 that a deliberate effort was made by the Government of Ceylon to correct the balance.[1] The truth appears to be that the sharp decline in expenditure in the Tamil provinces since 1931 provoked the charge of discrimination. Prior to 1931, agricultural policy was largely based on strictly economic considerations.[2] It was held that in terms of output, particularly of rice, better results at less cost could be obtained from the Northern and Eastern Provinces than from the others. Consequently, the bulk of the available resources was allocated to the construction and restoration of tanks and irrigation in areas most favourable to the production of rice.[3] The year 1931 (the first year of the State Council under the Donoughmore Constitution) was a year of exceptional financial difficulties.[4] The Ministry of Agriculture and Land set up a Sub-Committee to consider measures designed to effect economy; and it recommended that onwards, the Irrigation Department should concentrate its attention on the improvement of the Village irrigation works throughout the Island.[5] Within a few years of 1931, a vigorous campaign was launched to improve the state of agriculture in the more backward areas in order to arrest the drift from the country-side to the towns.

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon, p. 79.
3. Lands and Peoples, Vol. V, pp. 166-168.
4. Economic and Social Development of Ceylon 1926-1954. Colombo. Ministry of Finance, pp. 19-20-
5. Ibid., p. 24.

That the population of these areas was mainly Sinhalese, was a factor which must have played a fairly important part in the formulation of this policy.[1] The larger proportion of public revenue devoted to irrigation works in the Sinhalese provinces from 1931 to 1947 naturally involved a considerable diversion of funds, otherwise available to the Tamil Provinces. The Sinhalese contention, however, was that the restoration of agriculture in the Sinhalese Provinces was long overdue and that the Government's policy was only an endeavour to make good the neglect of past generation and to base public expenditure on the needs of the locality.[2] The attitude of the Ceylon Government was expressed by the Minister for Agriculture on the floor of the State Council as follows:-

> "Irrigation works are needed and have to be carried out in all parts of the Island, and it is not my intention to neglect any Province. All that could be done for any Province we are ready to do. Merely because the other Provinces now receive the attention which they did not get before, merely because we have made the Irrigation Department an 'all Island' Department carrying out Island-wide activities, my Honourable Friend should not think that the Eastern Province is being neglected."[3]

But when all is said and done, there is not the slightest doubt that the policy followed by the Government of Ceylon did a calculated harm to the cause of Indo-Ceylon relations. Most of the irrigation works in the Northern and Eastern Provinces were very badly neglected. Even the Soulbury Commission, which was not particularly friendly to the Indian population in Ceylon, was obliged to state:

> "We venture to express the hope that the repair and restoration of irrigation works, in the Mannar and Mullaittiva districts of the Northern Province may receive a high

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1. Jennings: The Economy of Ceylon, p. 91.
2. Ceylon observer, November 14, 1947.
3. Ceylon State Council Debates, Sept. 1, 1944, p. 1895.

priority - we visited this area and observed widespread indications of deterioration and decay in the villages and countryside - and also that the means of communication between the Northern and Eastern Provinces, which in our opinion leave much to be desired, should be materially improved."[1]

Closely connected with the question of public expenditure on irrigation was the question of land. In the 19th century, the British Government had granted lands to the planters on ridiculously low prices, and due to the boom in the coffee industry, all the cultivable land had been purchased by the British capitalists, so that in course of time, the Sinhalese peasant had become almost landless.[2] With the growth of political consciousness, and the development of the nationalist movement in Ceylon, the Sinhalese leaders began to curse the Indian community for all their economic evils.[3] In this game, as we stated earlier, the Catholic Action had played a prominent role. In 1933, the Land Development Ordinance was introduced in the State Council of Ceylon, which was clearly discriminatory to the Indian population. The term 'Ceylonese' was defined in the Ordinance as "a person of either sex domiciled in this Island and possessing a Ceylon domicile of origin."[4] In this context, an Indian had to prove not only that he was domiciled in the Island, and born in Ceylon, but that his father had also been born there. The Indians, therefore, were put in a category separate from the indigenous population. This order provided for alienation of land for the benefit of the Ceylonese middle class; under Section 171 of the Ordinance, it was provided that a middle

1. Soulbury Report, pp. 47-48.
2. Kotelawala, op. cit., pp. 31-32, 34-36.
3. Ibid., pp. 98-99.
4. Legislative Enactments of Ceylon: The Land Development Ordinance, Chapter 320, Sec. 2, p. 1.

class Ceylonese was a person whose annual income was upto Rs 6,000. The Indians were clearly barred from the benefits of this legislation.[1] The most objectionable feature of this scheme was embodied in Section 172 of the Ordinance, which empowered the Government to make regulations for the purpose of lending money to the grantees of land out of the funds sanctioned by the State Council from the public exchequer. Thus, while the benefits of the Ordinance were denied to the Indian community, they had to contribute to the funds which would be spent on the development of the land granted to the Sinhalese.[2] This Ordinance was followed by a series of legislations right up to 1946 and all of them constituted a serious encroachment on the economic rights of the Indians.[3]

As in the sphere of agriculture, so in the spheres of Medical Services, Education, and public appointments. Out of some 12 million rupees voted from Revenue and Loan Funds, between 1931-45 for the construction of hospitals and dispensaries, only a million rupees were allocated to the Tamil Provinces.[4] Out of a total of 130 cottage and rural hospitals, dispensaries and maternity homes established in the Island during this period, only 14 were situated in these Provinces.[5] Despite an immense increase in the education vote since 1931, a negligible provision of state school was made for the Tamil Provinces. Out of more than 4,000 schools established or assisted by the Government during the period 1933-1942, over 3,000 were Sinhalese and only

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1. Times of Ceylon, Jan. 4, 1934.
2. Ceylon To-day, Vol. II, No. I.
3. Ceylon Observer. Annual Number, 1946, pp. 7-10.
4. Cmd. 6677, para 150.
5. Ibid., paras 169-171.

about 900 Tamils.[1] Whereas in the case of the Sinhalese, the Government schools exceeded the number of Assisted schools by more than one-third, the Government Tamil schools were only one-third of the Assisted Tamil Schools.[2] By this policy, a calculated effort was made by the Government of Ceylon to push the Sinhalese ahead of the Tamils, who were markedly superior to them all along.[3] The Sinhalese contention is that the discrepancies in expenditure and the disproportionate allocations of public money was just due to the Government's desire to redeem certain localities and communities from the neglect of past years, rather than to any deliberate partiality inspired by racial or religious motives.[4] This contention falls to the ground in the light of the religious and linguistic policies followed by the Government of Ceylon after 1947.

So far as public appointments are concerned, here also there were serious complaints of discrimination made by the Sinhalese-dominated Ceylon Government against the Indian and Ceylon Tamils.[5] It is true that by virtue of their education and diligence, the proportion of posts held by the Ceylon Tamils was not smaller than the size of their community would justify; on the contrary, until 1938, they appeared to have occupied a disproportionate number of posts in the administration.[6] That year, of 6002 pensionable officers, 3236 were Sinhalese and 1164 Ceylon Tamils. If these posts had been allotted in proportion to the population of each community, the share of the Ceylon Tamils

1. Sessional Paper XVII- 1962, pp. 21-25.
2. Cmd. 6677. paras 172-173.
3. Pakeman, op. cit., Chapter 8.
4. Ceylon To-day, Vol. III, No. 2.
5. Cmd. 6677, para 174.
6. Ibid., para 174.

would have been about 600. But their larger share was the consequence of the higher standard of literacy and education, which this community so long enjoyed, and of its energy and efficiency.[1] After 1938, discriminatory policies began and in order to improve the chances of Sinhalese candidates, various changes in examination syllabuses and conditions of entry were made as a result of the intervention of Sinhalese Ministers, who also endeavoured in various ways to use their influence with Selection Boards to favour candidates of their own race. One of the examples was that before 1931, Arithmetic was a compulsory subject for the General Clerical Services Examination; but after the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution that year, this subject was deleted from the list of compulsory subjects, because the well-known aptitude of the Tamils and the Indian population for Mathematics was thought to give them an advantage in it over their competitors of other races. Even the Soulbury Commission was constrained to observe that "there can be no doubt that Ministers have used their influence.... in support of candidates for public appointments where they could."[2]

The general level of unemployment in Ceylon began to rise during the thirties of the present century. During 1930-32 following the great economic crisis, there was a severe trade depression and large number of men and women were thrown out of work. The principal industries of the Island were seriously affected.[3] The Sinhalese leaders now began to raise the slogan that the unemployment problem in Ceylon was largely due to the

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1. Ibid., para 175.
2. Soulbury Report, p. 50.
3. Sessional Paper VII- 1937. Colombo.

presence of the Indian community.[1] This was inspite of the fact that a Sub-Committee of the Legislature of Ceylon (the Informal Committee) effectively refuted the allegations:

> "(a) Fortunately for Ceylon the bulk of these (those thrown out of work) were Indian estate labourers, who returned to India and thus relieved the local Government of the necessity for providing for them. Over 100,000 left Ceylon in the years 1930-33.
>
> (b) The general volume of unemployment was increased, perhaps unavoidably, by Government's policy of retrenchment. The total number of persons employed directly by the various departments was reduced from 69,287 in 1930 to 60,553 in 1933."[2]

Now this mainly concerned rural unemployment and the question of urban employment which constituted rather an insignificant fraction of the former could not be relieved by axing a large number of daily-paid workers who, inspite of their long services, were bundled out of Ceylon on payment of meagre sums of gratuity and travelling expenses.[3] The Indians were blamed in regard to the acute unemployment on the familiar pleas such as under-cutting in wages and unrestricted immigration of the Indians into the Island. On October 1, 1936, the Governor of Ceylon appointed the Jackson Commission "to enquire into and report generally on the immigration of workers, skilled and unskilled (including assisted estate labourers) into Ceylon from India and other countries and in particular, to consider the following question:- (a) the extent of such immigration and whether it is increasing or decreasing; (b) whether such immigrations have caused or is likely to cause unemployment or other economic injury to the permanent population of the Island; (c) whether any restriction or control

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1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Sessional Paper VIII. 1938, p. 19.
3. Hindu, Jan. 4, 1939.

beyond that already existing, should be imposed on such immigration and, if so, what form such restriction or control should take."[1]

On the second question which was by far the most important, the findings of the Jackson Commission were:-

> "With regard to the past, I feel no doubt that it is broadly true to say that immigrant workers came to Ceylon for work for which Ceylonese were not available and for which, in the circumstances of the time, they could not have been made available by any action which employers could reasonably have been expected to take. So far from causing economic injury to the permanent population, immigrant workers made possible an economic and general advance which could not have taken place without them and in the benefits of which the great majority of the population, directly or indirectly, share to-day....
>
> The evidence of the absence or scarcity of Ceylonese in certain unskilled occupations, ... showed clearly in my opinion, that the causes of those conditions were mainly to be found in long-established racial traditions and social habits, and in deep-seated prejudices and disabilities growing from the same roots.
>
> ... It seems more probable that the restrictions on their customary means of earning their livelihood, during and since depression, left the majority baffled and helpless and with little prospect of quickly discovering in themselves the enterprise necessary to new fields of employment or the readiness to shed those ancient prejudices which held them back."[2]

The findings of the Jackson Commission were, however, ignored by the Government and all kinds of motives were attributed to the Commissioner.[3] The report was published in 1938.[4] Earlier in 1933, the State Council of Ceylon had passed a resolution that no new appointment of non-Ceylonese be made in the public services. Following the publication of the Jackson Report, the non-Ceylonese daily paid workers in Government employment

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1. Times of Ceylon, October 3, 1936.
2. Ceylon's Sessional Paper III- 1938, p. 32.
3. Times of Ceylon, March 15, 1938.
4. Ibid., April 3, 1938.

were made to retire in 1939.[1] Under the new scheme, a Ceylonese was defined as a person born in Ceylon; conversely, a non-Ceylonese would mean a person not born in Ceylon. Since in most of the cases, the fact of the birth was not recorded, the definition of a Ceylonese, which appears to be very generous and broad, could, in practice, be applied to debar a large number of Indian workers from benefits of citizenship.[2] In practice, only an insignificant number could succeed in retaining their employment.[3] Workers who had given the best part of their lives for the service of the Island, were now forced to seek new avenues of employment. It was in these circumstances that Nehru had paid a visit to Ceylon in 1939, to which we have already referred. This was followed by the ban which the Government of India placed on the emigration of all unskilled labour from India to Ceylon whether employed by Government or by private employers with effect from August 1, 1939.[4]

The ban led to interesting consequences.[5] As Ceylon's economic position depended mainly on plantation, their owners were naturally anxious to get the ban removed as soon as possib[le]. The Government of Ceylon, in a bid to persuade the Government o[f] India to remove the ban (and save Ceylon from the economic break-down), was forced to attend a conference at Delhi in 1940.[6] The proceedings of this conference, we have already covered. It

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1. Ceylon observer, May 4, 1939.
2. Ibid., May 7, 1939.
3. Times of Ceylon, June 3, 1939. Also see Ceylon Sessional Paper XVIII, 1940, pp. 3-7.
4. Hindu, August 7, 1939.
5. Ganguiee, B.N.: Indians in the Empire Overseas, p. 45.
6. Ibid., p. 47.

failed to resolve the deadlock. Next year, a conference met at Colombo and the proceedings of this conference have also been already covered earlier in this chapter. The policy of the Sinhalese leaders now was to quicken the pace of legislation affecting Indian residents in Ceylon.[1] On the one hand, they tried to whitle away the economic and employment rights of the Indians, which would render their political and other rights inconsequential, on the other, they endeavoured so to restrict their immigration into the Island as to make the Indian population in Ceylon quite an insignificant factor in her politics. The British ruling circles in Ceylon were running at cross purposes with the Sinhalese leaders.[2] The former wanted Indian labour; the latter did not. This was brought out clearly in the speech made by Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike on the floor of the Legislature of Ceylon on March 20, 1941. He said:

> "There was no desperate need on our part to come to an agreement. We did not want any particular thing from the Government of India. But His Excellency the Governor did want something and the planting interests did want something. There was nothing particular that we wanted from the Government of India that took us on that long journey. They wanted that ban removed. We were made a sort of cat's paw to perform that job."[3]

Under pressure from the Sinhalese politicians the Immigration Bill was introduced in the Legislature of Ceylon in March 1941. In the words of Mr. D.S. Senanayake "the object we have in view in this bill, is to make an attempt to protect Ceylon and its inhabitants from being swamped by outsiders."[4] To this also we have referred earlier. The Draft Bill included provisions for the quota of labourers, menials and other people who could

1. Jeffries: The Path to Independence, Chapter 3.
2. Ibid., p. 47.
3. Ceylon Hansard, Vol. XI, p. 594.
4. Ibid., Vol. X, p. 549.

do conservancy work.[1] This meant that Ceylon wanted Indians to be indentured in such a way as to require them to serve for a certain period and then to go back to India. The Bill, however, did not reach the Statute Book, because even the British authorities did not favour it.[2] Similar fate was meted out to the "Registration of non-Ceylonese Bill" which had a similar objective.[3] It provided for the registration of all those persons who did not have a domicile of origin. During the next three years, considerations of the Second World War dominated everything else. In 1944, the Soulbury Commission was appointed. This also has been fully covered earlier in this chapter. It was boycotted by the Ceylon Board of Ministers on the plea that the appointment of the Commissioners who were asked by His Majesty's Government to consult the minority interest was contrary to the assurances given by them in their declaration of May 1923.[4] The developments from 1945-47 have already been covered. It now remains for us to touch briefly on the question of civic status of the Indian population in Ceylon. To this now we turn.

§ 13

The Problem of Civic Rights

The local-self governing institutions in Ceylon as in India, may be said to be one of the creations of the British rule except for the Village Sabhas and Committees which are the outcome of a long historical evolution. Until 1865, the Island had no organised system of municipal administration.[5] It was only in

1. Times of Ceylon, March 21, 1941.
2. Ceylon observer, June 15, 1941.
3. Ibid., May 13, 1941.
4. Cmd. 6677. p. 3.
5. Weerawardana, op. cit., Chapter X.

1871 that the Village Councils were reorganised. A more complete administration for larger towns came into existence in 1898.[1] With the advance in the constitutional reform local self-government came into its own. In 1920, the District Councils - the Urban District Council and the Rural District Council - were invested with powers of general administration concerning public thoroughfares, public health and education. It was during the Donoughmore era (1931-1946) that the local self-governing institutions were modernized and put on a scientific basis.[2]

As we stated earlier, as long as power was concentrated in the British hands, there was, really speaking, no problem of the Indians in the Island. With its gradual transfer to the majority community, the question of civic rights of the Indian population became important. Before 1924, an Indian was considered a native for all intents and purposes. The Local Government Ordinance of 1924, for the first time, restricted his rights in relation to himself, his children and relatives.[3] An inhabitant of Ceylon was alone made eligible for a vote in the Municipal Elections. The term 'inhabitant' was defined to mean a male inhabitant who was not an excepted person and was above the age of 18 years.[4] The term 'excepted person' meant persons resident in the colony and being (i) persons commonly known as Europeans, (ii) persons commonly known as Burghers and (iii) labourers as defined in Ordinance No. 13 of 1899, including any woman or child related to such labourer or any aged or incapacitated relative of such

1. Donoughmore Commission Report, 1928, p. 109.
2. Pakeman, op. cit., Chapter 9.
3. Ibid., p. 127.
4. Jennings: Nationalism and Political Development in Ceylon, p. 49.

labourer. It is thus clear that as soon as the Sinhalese began to get a substantial measure of political power, a policy of discrimination in matters of civic status began.[1] In 1935, the Land Development Ordinance was passed which prevented non-Ceylonese from purchasing Crown land.[2] Since an Indian could own no land, he would have no rights in the Village Committees.[3] In 1938, the Ordinance was amended; while the Europeans and the Burghers were given the right to acquire land, the Indians were not.[4] The usual pleas were that the Indian immigrants already enjoyed considerable privileges, that they were exempted from Village Committee Taxes, and that they were guaranteed a minimum wage under the Minimum Wage Ordinance. These arguments amounted to saying that an Indian worker had no permanent interest in the Island and that he was only concerned with the protection of his economic rights. The tragedy of the situation was that the estate on which the Indians workers worked was not included in the Village Committee area.[5] Ironically, this had been done at the instance of Mr. K.P.S. Menon who was then the Agent of the Government of India in Ceylon. This fact is brought out in the observations made by Mr. Bandaranaike:

> "As late as 1933 or 1934, when the Agent of the Raj, Mr. Menon, wrote a memorandum on a proposal to extend the village committee franchise to Indian labourers, he catagorically and definitely opposed it, stating that the Indian labourer had absolutely nothing in common with the people of the country, that they lived lives of their own, protected by laws of their own, that they did not mix with the villagers who lived in areas adjoining those estates. Mr. Menon strongly protested against any suggestion of identifying their interests with those of the people of the country by extending to them the village committee franchise."[6]

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1. Mills, L.A.: Ceylon under British Rule', Chapter 6.
2. Times of Ceylon, Feb. 4, 1936.
3. Ibid., Feb. 6, 1936.
4. Ceylon Observer, Jan. 4, 1937.
5. Ibid., March 11, 1937.
6. Sessional Paper IX - 1941, p. 7.

The Amending Ordinance was reserved by the Governor for signification of His Majesty's pleasure because it clearly discriminated between a Sinhalese and an Indian worker. The Bill actually was not approved. In September 1938, another Amendment Bill was introduced, which, on paper, removed the discrimination by excluding all labourer residents on estates whether Ceylonese or Indians. In practice, however, only the Indian workers suffered, because there were hardly any Ceylonese labourer workin on the estates.[1] Finally, it may be stated that in bigger towns, voting qualifications related to the payment of taxes and possession of property.[2] Since the Indian workers possessed neither, their municipal rights were denied to them.[3]

§ 14

CONCLUSIONS

It is thus clear that the Indian population in Ceylon has been the mainstay of the economy of the Island. They not only opened up the land for plantation in the 19th century, but they have been largely responsible for the flourishing cash crops which bring fabulous foreign exchange to Ceylon. It is true that in the beginning they went to the Island in search of better living prospects, but it is equally important to remember that after living in the habitat of their choice they developed permanent interest in Ceylon. Quite a large number of the Indian workers in the Island have had their relations in different parts of South India. In some cases, part of their earnings have been

1. Ceylon Observer, Annual, 1940, p. 11.
2. Ibid., p. 14.
3. Times of Ceylon, September 17, 1938.

remitted by them to their friends and relatives in this country. This and the fact that much of the economic life of Ceylon had been controlled by the Ceylon Tamils provided food for propaganda to the ultra-nationalist Sinhalese leaders. The problem of the Indian labour in the Island gradually got involved in the nationalist movement. The Ceylon Tamils continued to follow Hindu religious practices and speak the Tamil language; about 20 per cent of them became Christians. While the Sinhalese have also not escaped the impact of Hinduism, and while Buddhism itself has been powerfully influenced in Ceylon by Hindu Tamil practices the Sinhalese nationalism, in a bid to distinguish itself, laid emphasis on Buddhism and Sinhala language. In order to be a good nationalist, therefore, one had to come in conflict with the Ceylon Tamils. Since most of them are naturally friendly with the Indian labourers, both the Ceylon Tamils as well as the Indian Tamils are bracketed as constituting hostile factors pitted against Sinhalese nationalism. Thus in Ceylon as in most technologically underdeveloped countries, self-identification of the average individual stops at the level of his immediate social group and does not take in wider circles. The existence of the two great communities of Sinhalese and Tamils, at once linguistic, religious and faintly racial has provided the respective leadership strata with strong bases for stimulating two distinct national sentiments. With the revival of Buddhism, the Sinhalese nationalism came in a frontal clash with the Catholic Church. While only 7 per cent of the Sinhalese population is catholic by religion, the percentage of Catholics among the Ceylon Tamils is 20 as we stated earlier. Most of the Sinhalese leaders, therefore, have felt that the Catholic Church had

wielded great influence over Tamil politicians who adopted an anti-Sinhala or separatist policy. G.G. Ponnambalam and C. Suntheralingam were reported to have accepted the Ministerial posts in the Government formed by Mr. D.S. Senanayake in 1947 on the advice of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Jaffna. The problem of Indians got involved in this tussle between the Sinhalese and the Ceylon Tamils. The role of the British Government in regard to this question positively contributed to the growing complications. On the one hand, the Imperialist Government was interested in regularly getting supplies of cheap labour, so that whenever under pressure of public opinion, the British Government in India was forced to place a ban on the emigration of Indian labour to Ceylon, the British authorities in the Island persuaded their counterpart in India to lift the ban. On the other hand, the British Government in Ceylon, along with the Catholic Action, encouraged the growing conflict between the Sinhalese and the Tamils, both Ceylon and Indians. They put the one set against the other and exploited their differences to their own advantage. Most of the Commissions appointed by the British Government to study the question of constitutional reform in Ceylon give unmistakable evidence of the double role played by the British Government. By the time that power came to be transferred to India and Ceylon, layers of hatred, suspiscion and distrust between the Sinhalese and the Tamils had accumulated. The situation in 1947, therefore, was a difficult one. It would call for a considerable measure of foresight and statesmanship to come to grips with it. The minimum that India can do even now is to issue a declaration that the Indian population in Ceylon is entirely a responsibility of the Island, and that we have got nothing to do with it. The

minimum which Ceylon can do is to grant all the human rights to the minorities in the Island. As long as the government of Ceylon persists in its policy of discrimination against the Indian Community, the people and government of India are bound to be interested in what is done to our brethren in the Island. For India it is not merely a question of leaving a few lakhs of Indians to their fate in Ceylon. What we suffer to people of Indian origin here will have its echo elsewhere. After all we are fighting racial discrimination in South Africa and we can not afford to do anything which weakens our case there. At the same time we have to put our relations with Ceylon on a sound basis and this is impossible to achieve unless we take a bold step to solve the vexed question of Indians in the Island.

Inspite of the Indo-Ceylon Accord of October 30, 1964, the difficulties remain.[1] Let us frankly recognise that in Ceylon

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1. In 1964, the Indian population in Ceylon is estimated as follows:

Indian Tamils	1,136,000	
Indian Moors	49,000	= 1,185,000

Out of this population, over 100,000 are Indian passport holders or Indian nationals and over 131,000 are now registered citizens of Ceylon. The number of the "stateless", therefore, amounts to about 950,000. The October 1964 Accord stipulates that (1) the passport holders are Indian citizens, that (2) the illicit immigrants (estimated to number between 1½ to 2 lakhs) must be found out and repatriated to India, that (3) of the stateless people, 5¼ lakhs will be granted Indian citizenship (together with their natural increase), that (4) 3 lakhs together with their natural increase, will be granted Ceylon citizenship, and that (5) the future of the remaining 1½ lakhs will be decided by a later agreement. The repatriation will be spread over 15 years. It was provided that officials of both the governments will meet as soon as possible to establish a joint machinery and to formulate the appropriate procedure for the implementation of this agreement. Till then, the Agreement simply remains a paper formula.

we have two nationalities on the European model and two corresponding sets of nationalisms. The British rule encouraged and abetted their [illegible] differences. But, then, the resulting tension was also overshadowed to some extent by the common aim of achieving full or partial emancipation from colonial rule. With this aim achieved, the tension between the two nationalities was bound to assume the character of the major social phenomenon on the Ceylonese scene. The relative smallness of the Island and the geographical distribution of the two nationalities make the Island's partition most unlikely. Ceylon seems faced with the choice between a policy of pluralism and one of integration, both as we know, admitting of several far-reaching variations. In any case India must show imagination and generosity to a tiny, neighbourly Island.

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This dissertation is based on four categories of sources. In the first place, there are some unpublished documents, which I consulted in the archives of India and Ceylon (New Delhi and Nauwara Eliya). Some documents were made available to me by the courtsey of people whose names I am under an obligation not to disclose. The bulk of the primary sources which I consulted are available in published form. These I am listing below. Secondly, there are a large number of books in English language which are in the nature of secondary sources. These too I am listing. Most of the newspapers and journals which I have used are in English language. I also consulted a few Sinhalese and Tamil newspapers (translations in English).

Thirdly, on-the-spot investigations were made during my visit to Ceylon which was made possible by a grant from the University Grants Commission made available to me by Dr. B. Prasad, the Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University. I left for Ceylon by train, and reached Colombo on March 8, 1963. From Dhanushkodi to Talaimannar I travelled by Steamer, where I found the treatment given to Indians was bad and discriminatory. An example of this discriminatory treatment is that while nationals of other countries are not subjected to the irksome formalities of quarantine, all Indians, irrespective of the class they travel and without regard to whether they are in possession of a valid International Health Certificate, are subjected to these formalities. On the first day of my stay in Ceylon, I met a number of Trade Union leaders in the capital, with a view to gathering first impressions of the conditions of Indian workers

in the Island. I met the officials of the Democratic Workers' Congress and the Ceylon Workers' Congress. I sought and got an interview with Mr. Jaymanne, Secretary, Ceylon's Estate Employers' Federation, and from him I got useful material. I fixed engagements with some of the leaders in the Ceylon Government, and left for Peradeynia the same day. On the 9th and 10th of March, I interviewed Dr. Wilson (Political Science Department), Prof. Rajaratnam (Economics Department), Prof. Jaysooria (Economics Department), Dr. A.K. Sarkar (Philosophy Department), Prof. Balkrishna (Economics Department), Dr. Kailash Pati (Commerce Department), Prof. Karuna Ratna (Leader of M.E.P.), Prof. Wijese Kera (Sanskrit Department), Prof. T. Nadaraja (Dean of Law), Mr. Chandrasheikharan (Education Department), and Dr. W. Pachow (Buddhist Culture and Chinese language). I also met the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Nicholas Attygala. From all these gentlemen I secured useful information on the problems of Indians in Ceylon.

Back in the capital, I met Mr. R.G. Senanayake (M.P.), Mr. S. Thondaman (M.P.), Mr. N.P. Vijayratna (Ceylon Service Commission), Mr. Dudley Senanayake (M.P.), Mr. K.M.P. Rajaratna (M.P.), Dr. E.M.V. Naganathan (M.P.), Sir Rajik Fareed (M.P.), Mr. W. Dahanayake, (M.P.), Mr. S.P. Amar Singham (Advocate), Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike (Cabinet Minister), Mr. Illangaratne (Minister), Mr. Badiuddin Mohammad (Minister of Education), Mr. Selvanayagam (M.P.) and a few leading Editors of Ceylon newspapers. I had a brief talk with Mr. Justice T.S. Fernando of the Supreme Court of Ceylon. From all these leaders, useful information was gathered and references were obtained. My talk

with the Minister of Education lasting for 90 minutes was particularly useful and he helped me with a list of useful references on the subject of my research. Towards the end of my visit, I interviewed Mr. B.K. Kapoor, India's High Commissioner in Ceylon. We discussed the genesis and development of the Indo-Ceylon problem over the years. This was a very useful one hour spent at the Indian High Commission at Colombo.

The second part of my activity in Ceylon related to the study of the conditions of Indian workers in the Tea and Rubber Plantations in Ceylon. Since the time at my disposal was very short, I could not survey all the Plantations, but for intensive study, I selected the Oliphant Estate in Nuwara Eliya. There I visited Maha Gastotte Estate and went to the Workers' Line Rooms. I also visited a Representative School, where workers' children receive education and where Mr. C. Vijayratna Singham is the Principal. In the Nuwara Eliya District I went round most of the Tea Estates and collected useful data. I am grateful to Principal Vijayaratna Singham through whose courtesy and help I got access to valuable material in the Ceylon Government Archives at Nuwara Eliya. I also visited the Sita Eliya which in Indian folk lore is known as Asoka Vatika. I paid a short visit to Anuradhapura and Sigirya which are the most important sites from the point of view of Indo-Ceylon Cultural contacts.

The third part of my activities in Ceylon related to consultations in the Libraries. The Paradeynia University Library is not particularly rich on the question of Indians in Ceylon. But the archives in Nuwara Eliya and the Parliament Library in Colombo are more useful. I had to engage a few typists to get

useful extracts typed out quickly in a short time. I went to visit a number of Settlements in Talaimanar and Jaffna and from there also useful material was collected.

After returning to India I met the Elder Statesman of India Mr. C.R. Ragopalchari and Dr. K.M. Munshi and discussed many points with them. I also met some officials who wish to remain anonymous and had useful discussions with them.

Fourth and finally, my correspondence with Sir Ivor Jennings, Master of Trinity Hall, Cambridge is a source which is a class in itself. Since 1957, I have been in constant touch with him and on many points he alone could have thrown light. Direct citations from this correspondence have been avoided as far as possible and this has been in line with Sir Ivor Jennings wishes.

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(C.O. = Ceylon Order)

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